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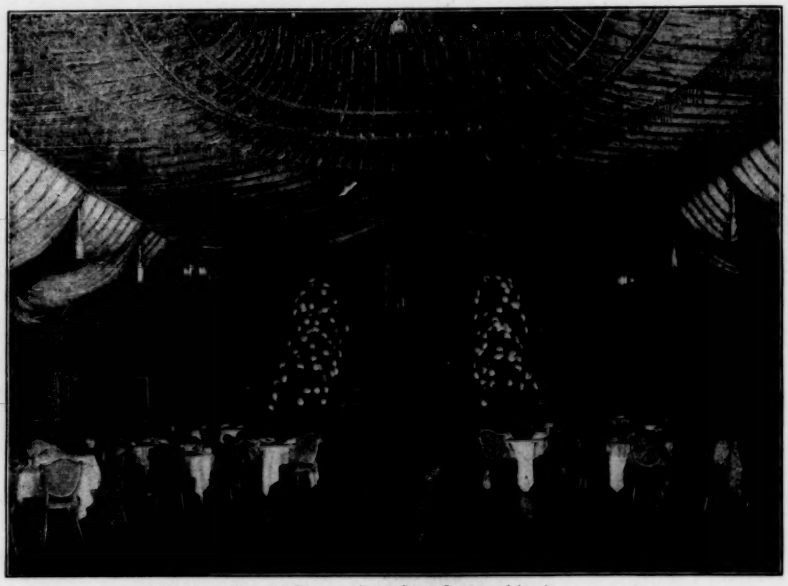
A Complete Little Novel

By Lillian Foster Barrett



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Vol. LIV. FEBRUARY, 1918 No. 2

The SMART SET

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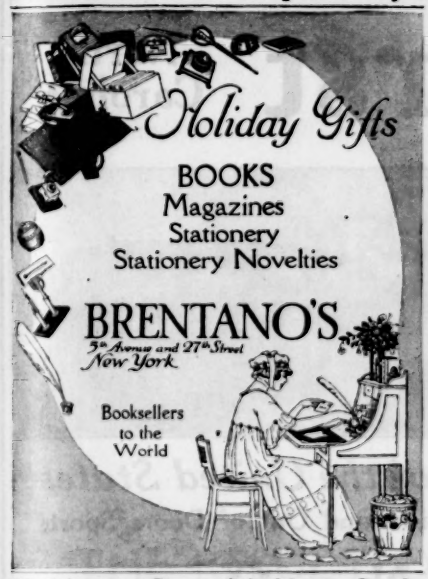

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Vol. LIV. FEBRUARY, 1918 No. 2

The SMART SET

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THE RESULT OF HIS INVESTIGATIONS

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

BENTON made a study of women for a period of three months. During that time he met, was introduced to, flirted with, caressed, quarrelled with, danced with, motored with, and ignored more than a hundred women. They ranged in social standing from the wife of the Chinese Ambassador, who was able to trace her ancestry far beyond the pre-Adamite period, to a little shop girl who was raised in an orphans' home. He met and observed a certain millionaire's daughter, who, they say, is the ugliest woman who ever wanted to pose à la Mrs. Vernon Castle, and a certain butcher's daughter who is the most beautiful woman who ever tea'd at Sherry's.

He studied, observed and analyzed these women for the benefit of the masculine portion of humanity. Of the hundred women, fifty-seven were, to speak kindly, somewhat plain. Twenty-nine of the remainder were either in love, falling in love, or recovering from being in love.

Five beautiful women did not like his cigarettes, or his neckties, or his speaking voice, and four possessed exacting husbands. One had thick ankles, one became frightened easily and one was faithful to her husband. Benton studied the two that were left.

At the end of another month he was able to tabulate the complete results of his investigations. These were as follows:

1. Blondes are fickle.
2. So are brunettes.

AN EPILOGUE TO LOVE

By Arthur Symons

DEAR, how we loved each other, you and I.
Not kissing lips are closer in a kiss
Than heart to heart were we, and eye to eye.

Days came and went, and with the day my love;
There's rapping at the door; ah, who is this?
This, in the mauve hat and the mantle of mauve!

And then our little dinners, just we two,
So happily alone amid a crowd,
And so proud the men all looked at you.

And certain stars of midnight, good to see
Waveringly through fallen hair, a cloud:
The stars at midnight from my balcony.

All's over now: your little hand no more
Sets the gay echoes ringing on the stairs,
Chiming a carillon upon my door.

And how we wept at parting; how I heard
The last good-bye, and felt a world of cares
Heavily lapse upon me at the word.

And how I missed you as I went about,
Hungering for your feast of love and youth.
. . . A mouth has passed: oh Love, to have found out.

What I had never guessed while you were here,
The hateful and the comfortable truth,
How well I can get on without you, dear!

SOME people think that to be charming they must be entertaining. In reality, to be charming one must be entertained.

THE MORGAN BLEECKERS

By Lillian Foster Barrett

CHAPTER I

THE Morgan Bleeckers were back in town for the winter, after the usual number of desultory weeks at mountain and seashore. The expression, "The Morgan Bleeckers," had come to have a special significance for Society during the last ten years. Instead of it being discarded, as no longer applicable to Eleanor and her husband, after Morgan's decision to identify himself entirely with Continental interests, someone had happily hit upon the idea of continuing it to embrace Eleanor and the cortège immediately installed in Morgan's place. This cortège was a curious thing, an anomaly that defied definition. Hence, the continuance of "The Morgan Bleeckers" phrase proved a happy solution, for it covered everything comfortably and meant to the initiated just what it was supposed to mean.

Even Morgan Bleecker, himself, in Paris or Hong Kong as the case might be, could pick up a paper and read quite dispassionately and with the utmost detachment that "The Morgan Bleeckers" had taken a house in Lenox, or that "The Morgan Bleeckers" were wintering in Palm Beach. He had no sense at all of personal implication in the matter; the expression meant to him, as to the world, simply Eleanor plus her followers.

Eleanor Bleecker possessed a personality that was a triumph, in that it has the curious power not only of attracting with its flare but of sustaining interest by its flicker. She was of brilliant wit, which she knew cleverly how to subdue, at the psychological moment, to the point of an almost veiled mysticism. The slanting blue eyes with their long lashes could dare or defy, then soften to sad appeal or hold all the ingenuous wonder of innocence in their depth. She was beautiful, undeniably, with a purity of feature and classic grace of line. Every painter of note in America or Europe had painted her; all had failed to get her, as she was, for her charm was essentially an elusive one.

Eleanor did things, the oddest, most inexplicable things in the world, but the idea of not accepting her, whatever she might do, was too preposterous ever to enter the mind of anybody. As long as Eleanor was Eleanor, she could do as she liked. People were never sure whether to set down her actions as simply whimsical perversities or as manifestations of a ratiocination too complex for the ordinary thinking mind to grasp. Society talked a lot, those first few years after Morgan's departure, speculated somewhat, as one does about the latest fad or current rumor. Eleanor knew she was the subject of discussion but only smiled her mysterious smile as she continued to follow her will o' the wisps. Was it for the fun of the chase? Or was Eleanor, after all, a real votary of the occult, and did she hope eventually to find the pot of gold indicated by the elusive rainbow mists?

Of course, the will o' the wisps took strange, almost uncanny forms at times. Rather fitful guides, one might argue, had there been a goal in view! For instance, one year Eleanor attached to herself a weird Hindoo creature. He was the sort one would invariably have sent around to "the other door"; but

with Eleanor's sanction he created a furor, and at the end of the season had a generous following of those who walked "bare foot in the early dew."

Eleanor enjoyed it immensely. "It's so good for the soul—and the complexion."

Then with a soft sigh she added reflectively, "But then, a woman's complexion *is* her soul," which goes to show Eleanor *had* absorbed something of her mystic's doctrine.

The Hindoo and his religion passed, as Hindoos and religions do. He was followed by a Russian painter, picked up from the steerage on a trip across. This man proved an inspiration until he began to learn English. There was one youth dignified by the term of secretary. Then there was a woman. Eleanor's prestige was shown by the fact that she could even induce Society to take up an unknown of the feminine gender. The girl had been a reporter or something of the sort and had the face of a Madonna. She succeeded afterwards in getting mixed up in a bad shooting affair in London. So it went, but Eleanor was imperturbable.

The term of each was short, one overlapping another, however, so that Eleanor was never by herself. Was it that her interest in mankind, even in its oddest forms, was a genuine one, or simply that her restless energy must have an outlet? Yet again, could it be that Eleanor had a strange, inexplicable terror of being alone, terror lest, deprived of the diversity of association that made up her existence, she should be thrown upon the last resource of self and thought? Was she, in a way, protecting herself from herself by a sort of human barrage?

Whatever her motive, she never left anything to the chance encounters of house parties.

"It's all a lottery," she had said once. "Each might prove worthy a grand passion, and yet again, I might be utterly bored."

So she travelled *en traine* always; one, two, three of her own followers as the case might be.

An anecdote is told of a worthy hostess who was expecting the Morgan Bleeckers for a week.

"It's a little embarrassing when one's household is limited," she confided to a sympathizing friend. "You don't happen to know at the present moment how many of her is she?"

Not one of the men in Eleanor's cortège had ever been referred to, even in whispered colloquy, as her lover.

This was somewhat surprising, for, apart from the Hindoo and the Russian and the anemic amanuensis, there were many who would have qualified most excellently for that rôle. There was Billy Severn, for instance, who had lived at her town house one whole winter. Billy of notorious amours! And there were others of Morgan's own easy-going, sport-loving set who would have been only too happy to act the comforter of their friend's charming wife after his sudden, disconcerting move abroad.

Again, there had been a yachting trip one autumn to the blue Caribbean with —but why go into details? There had been, to be sure, one little incident in connection with this trip that had caused question; but gossip—real gossip—there was none.

Eleanor, of course, never descended to explanations; possibly it was this that disarmed suspicion. Or perhaps it was that the sting of gossip was drawn by the very fact that she never made the slightest pretense of observing convention. Or was it there was something about Eleanor, herself, that precluded the idea of a vulgar liaison? For, after all, the liaison is of the woman too little clever to rise above appearances.

The main characteristic of Eleanor Bleecker, in her dealings with men and women alike, was a reserve that was the more noticeable the less readily it lent itself to analysis. It was there, immensely, powerfully there; vague, indefinable, though it be. People accepted it, as one accepts gravitation and the conservation of energy, without actual-

ly demanding a practical demonstration. It was, as it were, a tradition.

The fact that others never violated this reserve of Eleanor's was the more remarkable in that she herself went to all lengths and respected nothing. She said anything, did anything. It was as if she alone were privileged and her friends admitted her supreme fitness to be so.

No one had ever thought of becoming intimate with Eleanor; that would have been, perhaps, too great a responsibility. All one could do was to take her as one might a brilliant meteor in the heavens, with a gasp of admiration for its flare, an intense wonder, and a shiver of apprehension at the danger in its glow. Gossip, after all, is born of intimate associations, and so Eleanor as a luminary body with its own orbit quite escaped.

That yachting trip in the blue Caribbean, however, was differentiated from all the other of Eleanor's previous parties by a new factor that showed itself at once as having to be dealt with. This was the presence of Eleanor's eleven-year-old daughter.

When Morgan Bleecker had left America, everyone had understood that there had been a lavish settlement made upon his wife (Morgan's scale of doing things was as extravagant as Eleanor's) and an agreement whereby she was to have the child. Society had sanctioned the deal with its approval, and then, in following the bewildering events of Eleanor's career from that time on, had forgotten the fact that there was a child. Hence the sudden appearance of a charming little thing with deep eyes and dark curls was a bit disconcerting. Particularly as a member of a yachting party where the presiding genius happened to be André le Conte! For the first time in her life, Eleanor had really opened herself to criticism.

"But, my dear—" began Mrs. Anderson Prescott, one of the chosen party, and then let her remonstrance trail off to nothing as she caught the strange look in her hostess's eyes.

CHAPTER II

Audrey Bleecker was a stormy, impetuous child. A casual observer could not have told whether her bringing up was a haphazard process, hit or miss, and touching in no point her mother's life, or whether it was a carefully worked out system inexorably enforced.

For instance, the child had a variety of nurses. The continual change from one to another left little Audrey singularly unattached. Whether it was fitfulness on Eleanor's part that prompted this change, or a high standard of excellence which it was impossible for the average domestic to meet, no one could tell. The other servants in the house eventually learned to take the instability of the nursery service for granted.

It is possible that Audrey's good disposition was forfeit to this experiment, if experiment it were, for a child in its development needs a certain sense of security, produced by permanent relations, a security that a kaleidoscopic retinue precludes. At five Audrey had become desperately attached to an old French nurse Eleanor had brought from Paris. The child showed herself most amenable to the good woman's discipline and became fairly tractable under her influence. In two years Eleanor dismissed old Nana, generously but without explanation. Audrey cried herself to sleep for weeks afterwards, but Eleanor was firm in her stand.

This tragedy in Audrey's life was equalled by another one two years later of similar nature. Audrey's pet dog died. Eleanor sat in the next room to the nursery and, as she listened to the child's pitiful, heart-rending sobs, she silently determined Audrey should never again have another pet. She never did.

Eleanor's attitude toward the child was one of such extreme aloofness that it gave the effect at times of an almost studied indifference, and robbed the relation between the two of all spontaneity and natural exchange of affection. Eleanor watched the child, as she watched the new parlor maid or

a footman on probation, with a careful scrutiny, but she avoided direct personal encounters. To be sure the nurse or governess in charge had long sessions nightly with Eleanor as she dressed for dinner. She seemed to have the knack of drawing out from the good people just what she wanted to know, so no detail of the day ever escaped her. Audrey herself, however, was never allowed the intimacy of her mother's room.

As is so often the case with natures as ardent as Audrey's, this indifference of her mother's, which she felt more and more keenly as she grew older, instead of cooling her own affection, but increased it to a degree that would have alarmed Eleanor, had she had any hint of what was going on in the child's mind. As it was, she interpreted the intense brooding in the dark eyes she found fixed upon her so frequently simply as childish obstinacy over some trifle or other, a set-to with the coachman or one of the maids, perhaps. For poor little Audrey was in some sort of disgrace always! In reality, however, the glow in the dark eyes as they rested on Eleanor betokened a mad adoration that partook almost of the nature of a fanatic worship.

It was while Audrey was in a fever that accompanied some childish complaint that Eleanor first glimpsed this strange devotion to herself. Audrey, in her ravings, betrayed the secret she had hidden so long and guarded so jealously in her queer little heart. Eleanor was touched and did not know what to do; it was all so different from what she had expected.

It was directly after this she had taken Audrey with her on the yachting trip.

CHAPTER III

If Eleanor had made any response to Mrs. Anderson Prescott's tentative objection to the child's presence on the yacht, it might have been to the effect that the tone of the party could be subdued to fit the emergency. As it was, however, the strange light in her eyes was her only answer. It may be that Eleanor was not sure of her own tenets in regard to the matter and so resented the implied criticism of her actions, the more justified she felt it to be. She had been swayed by a complexity of impulses; the realization that she was acting not wisely had come too late. As it was, the child was there on the yacht and they had to make the best of it.

They did make the best of it, all except André le Conte, who bungled things sadly. It was not like André to bungle, André the skilful intrigant; his failure in this particular instance was, therefore, the more signal.

André was a strange personality. A casual observer would have passed him by, doubtless, or pronounced him as "disgusting," little dreaming of the ability he possessed to dominate others.

He was blonde, in spite of his French extraction, and inclined to obesity. His little blue eyes were almost hidden in the puffy cheeks, and he had an odd way of putting his head on one side as he talked which gave him an air of condescending criticism. He was effeminate, confessedly so. But no one could fail of the inference, anyway, having once heard his high-pitched, falsetto voice, or noted his gestures that would have been a credit to any coquettish soubrette.

He was of the readiest wit, a wag, but a knave at heart. He could amuse, but he amused with a purpose. He was a sybarite, an epicure, and the flesh pots of Egypt were his devotion.

André le Conte had never been heard of until two years previous, when he had sprung into prominence over night. He had been a cigarette agent, principally living by his wits, a freebooter, with unbounded confidence that, given the opportunity, he could become the vogue. Opportunity came and André proved his faith in himself was not without foundation.

It was at the Beach Club in Palm Beach—but who hasn't heard of the incident? It was late in the season and people were bored, unconscionably so,

with themselves, each other, roulette—One afternoon at tea time, André contrived to be presented to Mrs. Austin Van Dam, with the full sense of her social leadership. She was the center of a group. There was a hush as André was ushered into their midst. What was it? Disapproval? Or a premonitory sense of the subtle power of this man, who was shortly to dominate Society's every move? Whatever it was, the moment was a dramatic one as André, with his head on one side and a glint in his narrowed eyes, took the lady's hand. She let him hold it an imperceptible second as he studied her condescendingly.

Then, "Madame," he cried, and his high-pitched voice rang out over the confusion of voices and penetrated to the utmost corner of the big salon, "You are a Madonna as to face; a frump, alas, as to clothes. Would to God I could dress you!"

That night André was the centre of the gayest, most exclusive dinner party the Beach Club had ever boasted. Installed on the right of his hostess, Mrs. Van Dam, he sparkled and found his triumph easy. From that time on he firmly planted his foot on the neck of Society which crowed with delight at the novelty of the experience. He came to dress not only Mrs. Austin Van Dam, but every other woman of the exclusive little côterie she controlled. He was an artist, unquestionably, and Paquin and Worth had to learn to cater to his moods.

"Mon Dieu!" he cried once, "I loath a little waist!" and the world of the corsetière was revolutionized.

Entertainment took a fresh impetus with Andre as inspiration. He achieved the most extravagant of affairs, reckoning nothing as beyond the bounds of the possible. His latest *bon mot* was flashed everywhere; no house party was complete without him.

He took his success with no degree of pride, considering it simply his due. He had somehow always believed his Destiny would be a golden one, and golden it had proved. He lived most lavishly, and there was no question as to the source of his income. Nor was there any question as to his supreme fitness to hold first place in this Society which, though unaware of his existence up to a few years ago, now held its sides in eager anticipation, ready to dissolve into mirth at the slightest quaver of his shrill falsetto. To support André, whatever his flights, now constituted Society's highest mission.

Eleanor had been one of the few to hold out against his leadership. "A dissolute wag" she had pronounced him. "Ingenious but noxious!" André had recognized her resistance and set about subtly to overcome it, possibly because he enjoyed the game, possibly because Eleanor was a power he could not afford to leave unconquered. In the end, Eleanor accepted him. He stayed with her off and on, and very soon made himself essential to her amusement.

The effeminate man has, after all, somewhat the advantage of the ordinary male in dealing with women. For he is able to insinuate himself into their lives because he is of them, through a certain kinship of nature, and aroused in them none of those antagonistic impulses that come from sharp sex contrast. The effeminate man has always his train, from which he can demand a stronger fealty than the really masculine individual would ever dare to ask.

So with André. He played his game wisely, with a subtlety and finesse outside the range of ordinary masculine intellect, with the result that Eleanor succumbed with the rest.

CHAPTER IV

THE yachting party had been arranged at André's instigation. "It will be a lark doing the little islands down there. But we must be sure to have our party well attuned."

Then at the last minute Audrey had appeared. André swore under his breath and put Eleanor down as the last word in inexplicable perversity. He sensed even at the first glance from the child's dark eyes that she did not

like him. He shrugged indifferently, but then the desire seized him to win the child as he had won the mother, to conquer her latent antagonism. His indifference gave way swiftly to a strange eagerness that he took care to hide under his soft words and sleek glances. He set down good sport in prospect, however, and was rather grateful to Eleanor in the end for having provided this side diversion.

Audrey and her governess had separate quarters from the others and occupied during the day a part of the deck little frequented. Her presence, therefore, in no way interfered with the schedule of pleasure arranged by André as master of ceremonies.

There were ten in the party, selected with the most careful discrimination not only in regard to the relative merits of each but with an eye to the effect of one upon another. The result was a brilliant one that might have been likened to a gorgeous mosaic, wherein the sense of the individual perfection of each of the component parts is lost in the wonderful blend of the conglomerate whole.

"A brilliancy to stain the white radiance of eternity," quoth André the first night at dinner, and his complacent satisfaction in what he had achieved was quite justifiable. The long salon, its luxury subdued by soft lighting; the perfectly appointed table with its glint of glass and silver; the perfume of the priceless flowers; the women, exquisite, clever; the deft interplay of wit and fancy,—all made for a sensuous well-being that was very dear to André. He let himself sink for a moment into the blissful contentment of it all. Then his eyes sought in gratitude those of Eleanor. With no one except Eleanor as hostess could this party have been made possible.

He caught her off guard, bent slightly forward, listening to the man at her side. The subdued light of the candles glinted fitfully on her brown gold hair, and the eyes showed inscrutable, haunting, as he drew them with his. Then suddenly, for the first time, there swept André, with a tantalizing sense as of unfulfilled fruition, the realization of how infinitely out of reach she was, for all the easy intimacy between them.

"Sighing for more worlds to conquer, André?" said Eleanor, her eyes steady in his for all the emotion and ill-concealed desire she read there.

His only answer was to raise his champagne glass with a certain show of bravado, but the hand that held it trembled violently. Eleanor looked at him curiously for a second and then turned away.

There was a moon—André had planned it that way. Our yachting party watched it wax and wane, with sentimentality or sadness or defiance, each according to his nature. They watched it grow from a delicate silver crescent, suspended lightly in the northern sky, to the heavy golden disc of the south that seemed to burden the tropical heavens with its weight. The weather was ideal, a remarkable thing for the time of year.

"Will power, my dear," laughed André when pressed in regard to the matter, and they almost believed him.

The yacht touched at the different islands and lingered just long enough. Of course they never followed the beaten path of tourist sight-seeing; it was the exploitation of the unknown, with whatever it held for startling surprises, that absorbed them.

There were many excursions to queer little settlements just back of the coast towns of northern South America. It's a question, in spite of general curiosity, if these would have been attempted without André, but somehow his presence seemed always a safeguard.

There was one very ugly business at a village called Murathvez, a place where conventions to say nothing of clothes, were almost unknown. George Fairfax was slightly under the influence of liquor and succeeded in antagonizing one of the Indian medicine men of the place by persistent efforts to buy one of the sacred monkeys. In a second, our party found itself deserted by its guides and surrounded by

a muttering, sinister throng. It was only André's contagious humor that saved the day. The pantomime of elaborate explanation and apology was so convincing that it dissipated all ill feeling at once. Anger was forgotten and all surged about André to present him with diverse baubles in recognition of their enjoyment of his performance. It was a close call, however, but was relished afterwards as a great adventure.

Then there were always native singers and dancers imported nightly to the yacht, and these gave just the finishing touch of the bizarre to all festivities.

It was perfect. There was a general tendency shown to drift. What you drifted into didn't really matter, as long as you did it gracefully and didn't start any disconcerting little eddies to interfere with those floating near by. Eleanor and André were thrown much together. It was only natural, as they were the two people responsible for the success of the party. André had made several attempts to break through Eleanor's reserve, but was clever enough in the end to accept their relation as she tacitly defined it, though with a certain amount of chagrin and an artist's reluctance to yield such a perfect setting for a love affair.

Audrey sat with the older people occasionally for tea. André's Pekinese had given him the excuse many a time for breaking into the sanctuary arranged for the child and her governess. Audrey loved the dog, but only sat and brooded with her deep eyes aglow whenever André made any advance to her. He offered to get her a little dog like Ito, but she only shook her head. He suggested a game of shuffle-board; she did not answer.

Occasionally he and Eleanor sat with her as she had her luncheon on deck. These proved occasions of the greatest sullenness on Audrey's part, with many apologies from the poor governess, who felt most keenly that the child's impoliteness was a reflection upon her training.

André, in the end, became provoked with this insistent hostility and attempted a little teasing. He would pull her curls and call her a naughty little lady, whereupon Audrey would flush up and flash such a look of annihilating scorn upon him that he could not help but laugh. "A queer little vixen," he pronounced her, but did not linger long, once her ire had been aroused.

A month passed and the *Idle Ease* was headed north. There was a chill in the air that brought with it a feeling of finality. The trip was over. There was a lingering regret for those warm tropical nights, a reluctance to take up the loose threads of New York existence where they had been laid down a few weeks before.

They were all having tea on deck. Eleanor felt an inexplicable sadness. André drooped at her side. He was trying hard to brighten his mood for the sake of the others, and had just launched out on a dissertation on clothes, à propos of the Murathvez episode. His point of departure was that clothes were the cause of all immorality, and he was covering the subject generously from Eve to Poiret.

The charm of André was that he could always find some new way of violating one's sensibilities. So delicate was his method of doing it, however, that one could give oneself up unrestrainedly to the pleasurable excitation aroused, without feeling dalled upon to make any show of resistance or concession to the proprieties.

Audrey appeared suddenly in the midst of the discussion. She curtesied very prettily and looked about for a seat. André drew her down beside him and tumbled Ito into her lap. Then the conversation continued, tempered by the child's presence, of course, but the more daring through the very necessity involved of relying for one's salient points on innuendo. André was at his best, as he worked into his subject, his rapier wit in full play. He demolished his opponents with bland ease. Raillery reigned; the drooping spirits of the party had been quite revived.

Suddenly André turned to Audrey. "And what does Mignon think about it?" he asked in his high pitched quaver and slipped his arm comfortably about her shoulders. Quick as a flash and before anyone could follow what was really happening, the child had struck out at him fiercely; then pulling herself away, she jumped up, regardless of her tea things, which went crashing on the floor.

It was all so unexpected, like a bolt from the blue. She stood there a tense second with gleaming eyes and clenched hands, then turned as if to rush away. André, infuriated, got in her path. "I hate you! I hate you!" she cried and seizing the hand he had put out blindly to check her she brought her sharp little teeth together in the flesh of it.

Eleanor, like the others, had been too startled to intervene. André's sharp cry of pain brought her to his assistance and she seized Audrey firmly. But the child shook her off, too. "Audrey!" cried her mother. "And I hate you because you like him!" the child screamed in the paroxysm of her anger. Then, realizing as she met her mother's eyes the import of the words she had uttered, she gave a long-drawn, heart-rending sob that racked her whole little body. Then she broke away from them in a wild fit of weeping.

Eleanor stood perfectly still, an almost frightened look in her wide open eyes. Then she resumed her seat carelessly. André, too, had recovered himself and, with his hand wrapped in a linen handkerchief, was to all appearances his debonair self again. The incident was never referred to on the yacht; it had been the one ugly feature of an otherwise perfect outing.

However, as we have said before, the matter was widely discussed in town and was relished as a particularly odd bit. The general sympathy went to André, who, after all, was pronounced as having a far better right on the yacht than Audrey.

Audrey disappeared from the horizon after that for three years. Eleanor, when addressed on the subject spoke vaguely of boarding school and girls' camps, etc. Then in a short while people forgot to ask, and Audrey was as if she had never been.

André, however, cherished his hurt. He felt that Audrey in coupling so crassly his name with Eleanor's at that precarious stage of their intimacy had spoiled the relation that existed between them. It was as if a coarse hand had been rubbed across a picture, the paint of which had not sufficiently set, to the blurring of its delicate beauty that a little more time might have rendered impervious to any impression from without.

André knew that it was because Eleanor with her fine sensibilities recognized this fact that from that time on she put him in the class with her other followers and no longer singled him out as an individual with claim to distinction. He stayed with her a great deal still, but he hated to feel himself reduced to the ranks.

There was now in vogue a youth interested in social reform; also a well known South American explorer. André sulked a little and then passed on to Elaine Prescott's, where his supremacy was unquestioned and he did not have to force himself to discussions of big game hunting and recreation fields for the working girl.

CHAPTER V

Now, as we have said before, "The Morgan Bleeckers" were back in town. Eleanor, as she faced the winter ahead, felt, an unusual sense of responsibility, as of many new problems about to be confronted. In the first place, there was Morgan. Morgan had been for many years so out of her range of calculations that she did not quite know how to meet this present issue. He had written very casually that he was coming to New York and thought an hour's talk about business things might be very much to the advantage of both. That part was all right; Eleanor always made a point when she was in Paris of seeing Morgan and having

just that sort of talk. They had both reached the stage, it would seem, where encounters could be taken quite dispassionately and all as a matter of course. It was far better that way; heroics, as Morgan had always protested, were distinctly middle class.

But, and here was the complicating factor, Morgan had mentioned that he would like very much to see Audrey. "The child must be a girl by now. You must needs grant my curiosity is a natural one—"

Eleanor, of course, admitted the fairness of the demand. It was with the bearings it had on Audrey that her anxiety had most to do. For, ever since the scene with André on the yacht, she had realized the passionate intensity of Audrey's nature, an intensity, unless guided in the proper channels, that would bring her tragic consequences. Eleanor had never talked directly to her of her father; but she knew instinctively that the child was fostering a hatred toward him in direct proportion to the love she bore her.

Eleanor had realized the unfairness of this, but, knowing that any direct attempt to mitigate that hatred would but succeed in aggravating it to a greater violence, she had never brought the matter to open discussion, trusting that time would bring Audrey a clearer sense of moral values, a sense based on reason rather than instinct. For, after all, Audrey was but a child. The realization, however, that she was approaching the dangerous transition stage to womanhood had been what had prompted Eleanor to cut short her boarding school career and to keep her at home this winter under her own direct supervision. The responsibility loomed a large one, but Eleanor hoped for much in the moulding of the girl's nature, still plastic, into a form most likely to bring her the greatest happiness. "Or if not the greatest happiness, the least unhappiness," mused Eleanor.

Now, in the very beginning, had entered as a complicatory factor this demand of Morgan's. Audrey had arrived home that afternoon; the proposed interview with her father was to be the next.

Eleanor had not gone down stairs to welcome Audrey; she still intended to avoid the little intimacies that usually exist between mother and daughter, arguing that intimacy destroys authority as well as perspective. She had left Miss Parsons to do the honors, Miss Parsons who for some months had proved her reliability as a sufficiently dun-colored personality not to inspire any great feeling one way or another in Audrey's breast. Eleanor had sent down word that she was resting, and expected the meeting would be deferred till dinner. She was greatly surprised as well as disconcerted, when, within an hour of Audrey's arrival, she heard a light step outside her door, then a knock too little deferential to argue her maid. Eleanor hesitated, weakly debating, and as she hesitated the door opened and Audrey came in with shining eyes.

"I couldn't wait," she cried impetuously, as she bent over and kissed her mother.

Eleanor was silent as Audrey seated herself on the side of the chaise longue, but Audrey was too full of happiness at her home coming to note the lack of response to her warmth. She took her mother's hand a little shyly and patted it affectionately.

"It's so splendid, *maman*, to be home again, and this time for good!"

Eleanor had had a sudden swift realization, as Audrey had entered the room, that the child in her had gone forever, and that the transition period she had thought to meet so adequately had passed. Audrey stood before her a developed thinking being, whose actions would be determined henceforth by her own will.

The last time Eleanor had seen her, a week-end at the school, the elements in her had been in a state of fusion, almost fermentation. But now—those elements had settled prematurely, before they had had time to work off what was most dangerous in their com-

position, had cooled, as it were, sufficiently to receive the final stamp of character, the pressure that fixes the value. Audrey was as she was, inexorably now.

Eleanor realized suddenly she was staring wide-eyed at the girl. She turned her face away with a sigh.

"How old are you, Audrey?" she asked.

The girl's straight brows contracted quickly. "Why—fourteen! You mean—you've forgotten?"

"One does forget," sighed Eleanor vaguely. Then, seeing she had hurt Audrey. "I've had a lot to think about lately."

She indicated a letter lying open beside her.

Audrey flushed as she caught sight of the heading.

"Your father—" Eleanor faltered.

Audrey rose hastily and went over to the window. "I don't want to hear about my father," she said in a low tone.

Eleanor waited a second, then, rising leisurely, went over to her dressing table and sat down.

"He has asked to see you," she said quietly.

Her back was toward Audrey so that she was quite unprepared for the quivering sob that was the only answer. Eleanor went white, as she turned just in time to see Audrey throw herself on the bed in a paroxysm of weeping. She rose unsteadily and went over to her.

"Audrey, Audrey dear!" But Audrey was too racked by her sobs to heed the unusual endearment. She cried as with all the pent-up sorrow of a life time and Eleanor could only sit by and fight down her own emotion.

After a while, Audrey became perfectly quiet. She put out her hand and, taking her mother's, rested so a few minutes thinking. Then she got up and, brushing back her tousled hair, faced her mother. There was in her eyes no trace of her weeping, only a steady determination.

"I am sorry to have made a scene my first day," she said with a quiet dignity.

"I am afraid," faltered Eleanor, "if you refuse to see him, he may think that I—that I—"

It was unusual for Eleanor's assurance to desert her, but she felt almost panic stricken in face of Audrey's unexpected refusal.

She floundered about.

"Couldn't you bring yourself to do it—for my sake?" she ended weakly.

Audrey shook her head.

"No," she said, "there are some things I must decide for myself."

Then stooping swiftly she kissed her mother on the forehead .

"Not even for you, *maman*!" she said with a smile.

"But what shall I tell him?" pleaded Eleanor.

Audrey thought a minute.

"Nothing," she brought out at last. "I shall write him."

Not the least evidence of Audrey's developed strength was the fact that Eleanor accepted her suggestion, startling as it seemed. That ended the discussion.

What Audrey said to her father, Eleanor never knew. The next day when she was ushered into the private office of Bleecker and Bleecker, she found Morgan perusing a note in a round, childish handwriting.

"What are you planning to do with her?" he asked indicating the letter.

"Bring about her happiness," said Eleanor tritely.

"How?"

"I don't know," she answered, a worried look in her eyes. "I have no definite plan formulated. Give me time."

He looked at her keenly. "Are you going to sacrifice yourself in the doing it, Eleanor?"

She glanced up quickly. "You told me once I was utterly selfish—"

"You are," he answered coolly. "Self sacrifice is the most horrible kind of selfishness. The martyr enjoys his crown of thorns."

She tried to lighten her tone to one

of banter. "Then if you hear of me offering myself up as a lamb for the slaughter—"

"I shall say—" he cut in "in search of a sensation newer than the last."

Eleanor winced. "Your faith in human nature is a beautiful thing, Morgan."

He laughed. "You know we are positively descending to recriminations to-day. We, who have schooled ourselves to the finest indifference!"

"Schooled ourselves?" she questioned with a delicate sarcasm.

He ignored this and went on. "I wonder what is the matter. The rain, perhaps! Or, yes—the influence of Audrey—" He became serious on the instant. "Eleanor," he said, "do you *love* Audrey?"

She nodded.

He shrugged slightly.

"Real love or more heroics?"

She met his eyes steadily and again succeeded in lightening her tone as she answered, "Again, I don't know."

When the business of the morning was all finished, Morgan asked Eleanor to lunch with him. This was part of the regular schedule; that Eleanor should refuse was likewise a part.

"When are you sailing?" asked Eleanor as she was about to leave.

"Saturday," he answered. "What are your winter plans?"

Eleanor hesitated for the slightest possible second. Then, "I'm planning to close the house and take Audrey around the world."

Morgan showed his surprise politely. "For how long?" he asked.

"Several years," answered Eleanor.

Her eyes were fixed on space as if she saw there the project and were trying to trace it out in all its intricate workings.

"Yes, several years," she repeated slowly.

Then brightening as she looked up at her husband. "It's a part of the scheme for Audrey, you know."

"Then there *is* a scheme. You said—"

"Yes, I know. But it came just now. A lightning inspiration!"

He shook his head. "I distrust that kind."

"You distrust everything, Morgan!" she answered quietly. "That's why you've been so successful in business, perhaps!"

"And so unsuccessful in other lines," he added.

He held her hand a trifle longer than usual as they were parting.

"So you still believe me incapable of real love?" she smiled up at him.

He allowed himself a second's perusal of her fine drawn face with its blue eyes of baffling softness.

"You are a paradox, Eleanor."

She raised her delicate brows.

"And a fallacious one," he added.

Her only answer was a deep drawn "Oh!"

He took her to the motor. Both recognized in this interview a personal quality the others, even those directly following the separation, had failed to possess. It was disconcerting, and Eleanor found herself strangely unstrung. They shook hands again.

Morgan hesitated before he closed the door. "Is there anybody else, Eleanor?" he brought out at last.

"Else?" She wasn't quite ready to meet it.

"Is there anybody?" he corrected with a smile.

"No." She had braced herself and now could answer steadily.

"If there ever should be, will you write me?"

Eleanor checked her surprise.

"For I still hope, you know, and faithfulness on your part constitutes a certain claim for me."

He put it casually; she knew the man too well, however, to be deceived and read the seriousness of the offer couched in such careless terms.

"Hope built on a paradox!" she cried, but almost failed of the note of mockery she intended.

"But yes—" she nodded. "I *will* write when the day comes I fall—"

"*If* the day comes you fall!" he cor-

rected. They smiled at their own absurdity.

"*Mariage à la mode!*" put in Eleanor, lightly, but she felt her lips quivering, and turned away to settle herself more comfortably.

"But you agree?" persisted Morgan.

"Yes," she answered seriously. "Good-bye."

CHAPTER VI

ELEANOR closed her house and announced an indefinite sojourn abroad. The fact that she had just opened the house with the obvious intention of spending the winter, or a good part of it, in town caused no comment at all. Eleanor's shifts were as unaccountable as the wind and no one ever thought of reckoning with them. The thing that did create a ripple of excitement, however, was the fact that, to all appearances, she was going alone. Audrey, of course, did not count. Could this departure from her usual code have any connection with Morgan's last, very hurried trip to the States? Or was it—

Well, André le Conte hit it rather neatly when he said: "She's tired of us all over here. She intends to recruit *en voyage*. *Mon Dieu!* Picture the bizarre train after three years in the Orient! The Hittites and Ishmaelites and—"

It is barely possible there might have been a little malice in André's speech. He was getting a bit sated with his American conquests and would have liked nothing better than to transfer operations to foreign fields. *Outre mer* activities would have been quite to his mood. As it was, there was nothing to do but resign gracefully in favor of the "ites," with only a telling *mot* now and then at Eleanor's expense.

"Eleanor says she is doing it for Audrey's sake," remarked Elaine Prescott when called upon for comment, but the lady's tone proved her the skeptic in regard to her friend's motives. It may be readily seen that Morgan's estimate of Eleanor as a purely selfish being numbered among its supporters those who professed to know her best.

In December "The Morgan Bleeckers," this time embracing only Eleanor and Audrey plus the necessary retinue of domestics, sailed for Naples, where the *Idle Ease* was to join them. The idea was a rather sketchy one as presented by Eleanor to her friends. "Oh! the Mediterranean and thereabouts for the winter—maybe Cairo. After that —somewhere east of Suez."

"Where the best is like the worst," quoted André softly.

Eleanor gave him a look bright with comprehension. "Had I been dodging the ten commandments, André, I should have taken you as my Baedeker. No —it's just—" And here she laughed quite merrily at the sententiousness of the remarks she was about to make, "It's just that I'm going to try to find myself as a mother."

"Mater Dolorosa," André called her from that time on, and she seemed to enjoy the appellation.

"It gives me a mission, you see," she explained.

"And you enjoy having a mission on hand as you enjoy having a dog," he commented.

She smiled her inscrutable smile and let it go at that.

In the end André took it almost too seriously. "I don't like it," he said and shook his head ominously. "Somehow, it savours too much of Renunciation."

Eleanor continued vague as to her plans until the last. "Send my letters to Morgan's bank in Paris," she had said. So what was there to do, but shrug and submit?

Eleanor's object in severing herself so entirely from old connections was really that she might give all her time to Audrey. There had come to her in Morgan's office by some queer association of ideas the conclusion that a person of Audrey's intense passions could be controlled only through the affections to the exclusion of everything appertaining to discipline or coercion. She knew that Audrey's devotion to

her was already a singularly strong one. Three years of mutual absorption, far from any distracting influence, and she felt her hold would be cemented into a bond that could resist any outside pressure. The tragedy of Audrey's future would be in a sharp conflict of emotions, and Eleanor hoped, when the crisis came, to be able by dint of her control to turn the scale as her own full experience prompted.

So she selected places unfrequented by the smart set, or fashionable places in off seasons. Society followed her progress around the world, for, although she herself was indefinite as to her itinerary, the newspapers bruited about her slightest move. So her friends came to learn that the *Idle Ease* was nearly wrecked in a storm off Stromboli, came to know that Eleanor had taken a house in Assouan after a triumphant trip up the Nile with the young Khedive as her guest, laughed as they read of her doing penance in the Holy Land for herself and her friends, "particularly André," she had written. Then had followed a winter in Ceylon, "the loveliest place in the world," she called it. "I'm coming back here to die some day."

So it went. Her career through the Orient was spectacular, extravagant, "exactly what we expected," pronounced Society, as it settled down to something else with the smug satisfaction prediction brings the broadest of us.

But Society, though following in detail Eleanor's progress across continents, had no hint of the growth of relation between her and Audrey, which was the salient thing accomplished in the three years.

At first there had been many tears and scenes, for Audrey's little heart, starved so long of intimacy and human love, was incapable of taking in moderation this new joy of daily intercourse with her mother. She cared so much, and, as is often the case with children, and those who have but just left childhood behind them, her exuberance took strange forms.

Eleanor gave herself to her unreservedly, but even so Audrey found occasions for jealousy and sulked or stormed as the mood prompted. It seemed, somehow, as if the deeper her love grew, the more perverse and wayward she became. The more desperately she tried to be reasonable and sought to please, the more inevitable the disobedience.

The happy times, the entr'actes, as it were, were the more beautiful to Audrey in that they seemed hallowed somehow by the spirit of repentance that followed always her misdeeds.

There was one trip with a caravan way out over the yellow sands of the Sahara, the recollection of which was stamped indelibly on Audrey's mind. She and her mother had talked quietly as they rode, talked as they sat in front of their tent at night, watching the moon climb the blue wall of the heavens. There seemed an infinite hush over everything, and, as is often the case in vast expanses, one could almost feel the palpable motion of the earth through space. Audrey's nature responded to the perfect beauty and contentment of the scene that yet made for a certain haunting sadness. She cried herself to sleep that night with a resolution to leave storms and tears behind, and to start on the morrow a life of reason and order.

It required many such resolutions on Audrey's part, much patience on Eleanor's, before the regime of peace and order was finally established on a firm footing. It may be that trip over the desert was the turning point. At any rate by the time Audrey had grown from a crude girl of fourteen to a beautiful creature of eighteen she had learned her lesson of self control. If she had not learned to subdue her feelings, at least she gave no outward manifestation of them. Even her devotion to her mother had been refined, so that there was practically no open demonstration ever made. It was only in the deep eyes of Audrey as they rested on her mother that one could gauge the full measure of her love.

At the end of the three years Eleanor decided she had accomplished as much as she could expect to accomplish with a nature like Audrey's, which, in spite of its many open impulses, she had learned to realize would always have its reservations. As to the nature of those reservations and their bearing for good or evil upon Audrey's life only the future could show.

"I think I shall plan to be in New York by Thanksgiving, Audrey," Eleanor had announced one day.

They were having tea in the courtyard of their Yokohama home. They had taken a house there some months before and had lingered far beyond the time they had set as the limit of their stay. Audrey had been interested in the home for child widows, an institution established there by some kindly American, and Eleanor had encouraged her in her work. The two had been drawn even closer by their concern with these poor little atoms of desolate humanity. It was a new sort of interest for Eleanor; she often smiled at the incongruity displayed in the fact that Audrey should be the one to teach her charity.

"Oh! I'm sorry," exclaimed Audrey. "I should like always to stay right here."

"But you see—" explained Eleanor, "You really have to come out."

Audrey said nothing, only stirred her tea vaguely.

Eleanor's eyes rested on her with a loving tenderness that was not free, however, from its element of scrutiny.

Audrey was very beautiful. The clinging yellow of her dress accentuated the perfect lines of her slight figure, and the drooping hat shaded to deeper depths the dusky eyes. It was only the smouldering glow of those eyes that confessed the old Audrey and belied the yielding suppleness of the slender body. Sitting there under the pergola trailed with its graceful wistaria, in the fitful light and shade of the hot afternoon, the girl presented a picture that quite satisfied the artist in Eleanor. If the parental in her were stirred by vague apprehension as to the dangers besetting such beauty, her calm exterior in no way showed it.

"You see you are nearly eighteen," Eleanor explained. A sigh struggled up from somewhere as Audrey met this. "And after the coming out—marriage, I suppose."

Eleanor was startled. That was the one subject she and Audrey had not faced together.

"Have you thought about marriage, Audrey?" she asked and almost missed the casual tone she meant to strike.

The girl nodded.

"Why have you never told me then?" asked Eleanor quickly.

"Because it's such a big thing, I think every girl ought to work it out for herself," said Audrey, her deep eyes heavy with thought.

"And you *have* worked it out?" Eleanor pressed her.

"Yes," she answered in a low tone.

Then, before Eleanor could quite decide what line to take, Audrey had buried her face in her hands. Eleanor got up quickly, but, before she could reach her, Audrey had straightened herself and risen, the three years' training evident in the poise and dignity she recovered so immediately. As Eleanor looked into the dark eyes, she almost hoped to see them cloud with the old storm of tears; instead, they met hers with a directness that caused her to fall back a step, with the feeling of one caught in an unpardonable intrusion. Her extended hand dropped to her side, and she turned away.

"You mustn't think too much," she said to cover her confusion. "It's dangerous."

Audrey had brightened now. As she started for the house she put her hand on Eleanor's shoulder, and, stooping, kissed her lightly on the forehead.

"I wish," she said gaily, "it might be always just this way—just you and I."

CHAPTER VII

Eleanor and Audrey reached New York on Thanksgiving as they had

planned. As Eleanor passed out of the Grand Central Station the thought swept through her mind—"How little really happens in three years!"

Had it not been for the change in Audrey, she would have completely doubted the passage of time. She recognized some of the officials about the Terminal, all most keenly anxious for her well-being, with an eye to the usual generous tip. There was Fairfax with his conventional footman expression waiting to take her to the motor. The chauffeur offered the same trite welcome, "Glad to see you back, Mrs. Bleecker." She might have been just home from a week-end in the country! The car was a newer model; that was the only essential difference she noticed.

So it went during the first months after Eleanor's return to town. There was no intense joy in her heart at getting back to old associations, only a certain resentment that things could not have assumed a newer aspect with which to distract her. Could it be, she asked herself often, that the craving for novelty of which she was so generally accused had become instead of a pose adopted temporarily a basic part of her nature? This restless dissatisfaction with things as they were, what did it argue? She went to the opening night at the Opera. The same singers with their usual mannerisms! The same people to bow to in the neighboring boxes!

Of course, there were a few differences, surface ones in the main. Elaine Prescott had spent part of the time in Reno and flaunted a new husband. There were some new comers in the field; some of the old set had dropped out of sight. Jack Cameron had shot himself two years previous. This brought Eleanor a distinct shock and a protest at the unreason of things. Jack above everybody else should have been spared, Jack with his bright optimism that made for a better faith in humanity. She recalled the yachting trip in the Indies.

"But why? What was it?" she pressed Elaine. "No, I didn't follow the newspapers."

Elaine had somewhat forgotten. It had happened during her sojourn west. "Finance—or let me see—There *was* something about an incurable disease."

André was still in the field. He had been taken ill a year after Eleanor left and had spent some time in a sanitarium outside of Paris. There had been absurd whispers of "softening of the brain," due to his excesses, but these rumors had been exploded when he returned of keener wit than ever. He was fatter, sleeker, and disguised less the evil in him. Again it took time for Eleanor to become used to him, but he bored her less than the others so the two soon fell into their old intimacy.

If New York presented nothing new to Eleanor, it was full of strange delights and experiences for Audrey. To drive up and down Fifth Avenue of an afternoon and watch Society *en pageant* was one of her keenest amusements. The ever varying, shifting crowds gave a spur to her youthful imagination.

"I can't help thinking what they're all like—what their lives are!" she explained to her mother.

Eleanor sighed and wished she, too, could be distracted so simply.

Then there were the theaters, the opera, the little teas among the younger set, the small informal dances. A variety of diversion, certainly, and Audrey loved it all.

The début was on Christmas eve. It was like all other débuts, distinctive only in being a little more lavish, a little better arranged perhaps than the average. For Eleanor was Society's hostess par excellence and an affair under her management partook of a brilliancy few others could hope to achieve.

Audrey was set down at once as the most charming débutante the season could hope to produce. People looked about for possibilities in the matrimonial field, but could put their fingers on no one distinctive enough in either fortune or personality to qualify. But

then, of course, the season was but just beginning. Possibly Audrey might make things interesting by falling in love with someone not *au beau milieu*. The dark eyes argued rebellion if she should ever be crossed in an affair of the heart. She and Eleanor were a striking contrast. In case of a struggle of wills, it would be really a question as to which to back.

This devotion of Eleanor's to Audrey was an extraordinary thing, rather annoying in fact. Her friends had expected nothing short of a Mohammedan priest or Spahi lover as souvenir of the Oriental tour, and, instead, Eleanor was presenting simply this, a sort of middle class motherly affection. Eleanor, indeed, was a paradox. But then, possibly it was all just part of a new game.

Eleanor never had disappointed them yet; surely now—

"What do *you* think about it, André?" asked Elaine with a worried look in her eyes.

"Think? I never think when it comes to a woman," answered André lightly "I follow my instincts."

"You find them unerring?"

"Absoluement."

"Well, tell us what to make of that. It's a pretty picture, isn't it?" She indicated Audrey and Eleanor standing together under a bower of poinsettia and smiling into each other's eyes. About them were grouped ten or twelve youths all expectant of a dance with the young débutante.

André studied the picture carefully. There was a flash of something in his eyes as he looked at Audrey that might have been interpreted as animosity; there was a prolonged scrutiny not without its element of suppressed intensity as he gazed at Eleanor.

"That is but a curtain raiser," he said.

"Is it to be tragedy or comedy?"

"L'ignorance fait le bonheur!" he laughed. "I refuse to be drawn out."

"You know, André—" Elaine had caught the strange look in his eyes, and, as the present cult made for frankness and easy discourse, she let him have it straight. "I have always thought you were in love with Eleanor."

André met it easily. "No, I'm not in love with her. She piques my curiosity, that's all."

Then after a pause he added.

"A neurotic curiosity is given as a compensation when our senses are too jaded to respond."

Elaine sighed. "When judgment day arrives I expect the divinity will be revealed to us in the form of the God Neuros."

But André was not listening.

"Besides," he said, following up his own vein, "the case of Eleanor, one would have that ecstacy diabolique peculiar to the crime of sacrilege."

Elaine looked at him shrewdly. "You place her high!"

"But don't you see? The impetus gained from such a height—" put in André blithely.

"Your depravity is a beautiful thing, André," said Elaine. "Had you lived in mediæval times, no nunnery would have proved sanctuary. But, really—" Elaine reverted to her former topic—"won't you give us a hint as to what to expect?"

André shrugged. "Fireworks! And the rest is silence!"

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER the début, which left Audrey eager and keen for more social triumphs, there followed three months of festivities, and she threw herself, with all the enthusiasm her young nature was capable of, into every diversion that offered itself. She made many friends. The girls all liked her, recognizing her as a leader. Had she proved herself less of a personality to be dealt with, she would not have had such singular success; but, like Eleanor, she was of sufficiently large nature to escape the petty jealousies and mean animosities aroused by those less convincing.

The men flocked to her side. It was not because her fortune was such a

matter of note, but rather that she herself possessed that indefinable charm of sex that appeals to old and young alike. Eleanor watched her carefully in her dealings with these various suitors, although she had come to realize that a girl like Audrey needs no watching. The innate dignity that was hers in spite of all her impetuosity and passion would be her safeguard. The wholesome attitude she took toward sex was shown in the frank acceptance as friends of the men who took her fancy; those she did not like she ignored. None succeeded in stirring in her any feeling akin to love.

She presented for the most part the appearance of being almost too practical. Only Eleanor guessed that she was a romanticist at heart, that her ideals in regard to love and marriage were of a nature that could never be met by any man who was a pupil of the teachings of present day civilization.

So for the whole winter, Audrey rode and drove and danced and laughed with Raleigh Brent and Billy Travers and Clement Douglas and all the others who made up her côterie, but Spring found her heart-whole.

At Easter-time Eleanor received a note from an old school friend who had married an English peer of indifferent fortune. Eleanor and Agnes Lavelle had kept up their early friendship in that they exchanged calls when Eleanor was in London, and letters at desultory intervals when she was not. Agnes wrote that her oldest son, Marcus Belgrove, Lord Tresham, was in rather poor health and was planning on a year in the States. Could Eleanor help in any way to make his visit worth while, Agnes would be most heartily grateful etc., etc.

Eleanor of course was charmed to do what she could for the youth and suggested that he come at once to her. The suggestion, needless to say, was taken and acted upon with remarkable promptness. Marcus Belgrave, Lord Tresham, known to his intimates as Lord Mark, arrived upon the scene of action within two weeks of Eleanor's receipt of his mother's first letter.

It had all gone so quickly, that it might have given one the full sense of a situation really romantic. Any idea of the romantic, however, would have been duly dispelled after a review, no matter how cursory, of Lord Mark's attributes. He was the sort of good looking young Englishman, unamenable to classification. He might just as well have been a journalist as a scion of nobility. His blonde hair was there, though one wouldn't take note of it particularly, and the only evidence of his mustache was that he was constantly feeling it. For the rest, he was tall and slight, agreeable, the sort that could be lived with with the least degree of discomfort possible. Not that he was empty; he was simply vague. That very vagueness, however, precluded anything that could savor of the romantic.

Eleanor breathed a sigh of relief after she had welcomed him. "You are just what I expected you to be," she said.

Lord Mark and Audrey stepped directly into the easiest possible friendship. His negativity was a capital offset for her very positive personality, and by the time the Morgan Bleeckers were ready to leave town for Newport, the relation between the two young people was on a very substantial footing. If Audrey wanted to go to the beach to bathe, Lord Mark discovered that was just what he wanted to do. If Audrey was inclined for tennis, Lord Mark appeared in white flannels, jauntily swinging his racket. If golf were her mood, Lord Mark was again ready. Another thing—Lord Mark, though a University man, was far from an excellent sportsman; so that Audrey had no pangs in making demands upon his time that she might have had in dealing with a man who so far surpassed her as to make fair and square sport an impossibility. As things stood, Lord Mark and Audrey played scratch at everything with always the delight-

ful uncertainty as to where the laurels were to go.

Then they talked,—that is, Audrey talked and Lord Mark listened. Occasionally he would throw out a suggestion as to a line, but the line was never followed up. It was almost as if exhaustion overtook him before he had taken more than a step or two in the direction indicated. Then he would sink into his customary vagueness, that, like the proverbial cloak of charity, covered him so generously.

Rumor had traveled from London during the summer that Lord Mark's trip to America had been somewhat precipitated by a love affair with a girl at the Gaiety. It was the sort of usual scrape in which the young Englishman becomes involved, as a preliminary step to following out his right and proper destiny,—that of marrying for money. Audrey had heard the report first and had carried it to Eleanor mirthfully. The idea of Lord Mark in the grip of a grand passion was really too amusing. Eleanor and Audrey enjoyed the joke together and then passed on to a casual discussion of Lord Mark himself.

"Oh, I like him immensely," said Audrey, "but—" and here she laughed merrily. "He was telling me the other day that someone had written a piece of music and dedicated it to him, doubtless this same lady of the footlights. She called the piece 'Nondescript'."

Eleanor smiled her acknowledgment of the point involved.

"Well, that's the way I feel about him," said Audrey with a certain finality in her tone.

Eleanor thought a minute. "I'm not so sure but what it's better to have that kind of music in the house than a steady diet of ragtime—or—"

She looked at Audrey a second and then went on with a semblance of carelessness, "Think of living up to the Good Friday spell at nine o'clock in the morning—after a ball—"

Audrey gave her one quick, searching look and then turned away.

"Poor Lord Mark!" she said, and Eleanor was left to take from her remark what she would.

In the meantime, Society accepted as a matter of course Lord Mark's presence in Eleanor's household and pronounced a titled match for Audrey as really the only thing. Lord Mark's name was one of the finest in England and Audrey's fortune was more than sufficient to restore it to its former glory. Besides Audrey was just the type to make London society realize that the American girl, apart from any prestige that may come as a result of a large income, is a factor to be dealt with. Audrey would undoubtedly become a leader in Continental society, and her success would redound to the glory of her native land. That Audrey was born to dominate seemed a self-evident fact.

That she had accepted Lord Mark's presence so readily was a little surprising. André had predicted fireworks, and here was evidence of a perfectly cold-blooded scheme being put through by mother and daughter, aiding and abetting each other. Perhaps that had been the object of Eleanor's three years' trip, to inculcate ambition into her daughter at a susceptible age, till all the natural instincts that ordinarily make for love and romance were dwarfed to insignificance. Eleanor was ambitious, of course; she always had been, and Audrey was proving herself an apt pupil of her mother. The result seemed inevitable, as Lord Mark lingered on.

It was at a dance that he decided that it was time his relation with Audrey should be put on a more definite basis. They had danced many dances together, and he felt he had gathered sufficient impetus for the final stroke.

He led Audrey to a conservatory, where she sank into a seat and, smiling up at him, said,

"It's so nice to get away for a while."

The remark was trite, but Lord Mark saw an opening and took it with greater promptitude than one would have expected of him.

"Oh, Audrey," he said as he seated

himself beside her and looked into her eyes, "I wish we could get away for a long time."

Be it said to Lord Mark's credit that his tone took on just the right shade of seriousness necessary to run home the point he was going to make. Audrey said nothing.

"I wish I could take you away—marry you and take you to England, you know—" It was triumphant, according to Lord Mark's standard.

Audrey continued to look at him thoughtfully.

Then, rousing herself, said,

"But Lord Mark, we're good friends and that's all."

"A man and wife should be good friends—" he started.

"And that's all?" Audrey put in with a smile.

"Well!" he shrugged.

Audrey regarded him shrewdly. "I'm glad you don't profess to love me, for you don't, I know, any more than I love you." Then, after a second's hesitation: "Lord Mark—I have heard rumors—"

He raised his eyebrows.

"Yes, I know. In England girls don't hear rumors. Well, they do over here. I know all about the little affair of the heart that prompted your trip to the States," she said in a kindly way.

"Is it for that reason—?" he began.

But she interrupted him. "Oh, dear, no! I'm not jealous, Lord Mark. That's just the point I wanted to make. If I cared for you, really cared, you know, I *would* have been jealous, don't you see?"

Of course Lord Mark didn't. He quite frankly showed himself as lost in the face of Audrey's bewildering argument.

"But—" he began.

He had blundered once upon this method of upholding his end of a discussion, and from that time on had employed it without scruple in every emergency.

"But—" he repeated, this time more emphatically.

Audrey judiciously saved him.

"No, Lord Mark," she said. "It's impossible."

"You mean—" and this time Lord Mark's face might be said to show real gloom. "You mean, you *won't* consider it?"

"No," said Audrey gently, "I couldn't. I'm not blaming you at all, you understand. I know the value of what you are offering me; it balances nicely what I have to give in return. It's only that—" And here her dark eyes showed the smouldering glow that came into them at moments of deep emotion. "It's only that love is such a beautiful thing, I could not give it up."

She spoke in a low voice that was vibrant with feeling.

Then, realizing that Lord Mark was fairly at sea as to just how to meet her confession, she rose quickly. He rose, too, awkward in the chagrin he could not help but feel.

She put her hand on his arm. "We are such friends, Lord Mark. Can't we go on as we have been, as if this had never happened?"

His face brightened at this.

"No one need know," she continued. "Not even mother. Promise me you will stay on." Then, as he hesitated, she said laughingly, "There's the National tennis next week and polo at the Pier. I'd *so* miss not having you."

He gave in at that.

"You know," he confided to her as they started out on the next dance, "I think it's even jollier than it was before."

Audrey's only answer was to press his arm understandingly and to give him a smile that had in it almost a maternal protectiveness and indulgence.

CHAPTER IX

It was at Polo in Narragansett, a fortnight later, that Audrey's romance was really to begin. She and Lord Mark had motored over from Newport for an especially good match between the Westchesters and some visiting team from Philadelphia. They were late and the contestants were already

on the field. Audrey recognized various friends in the home team as they galloped by, but for the most part it was all a blur of ponies, rushing, dashing, wheeling, rearing, and of men straining over the saddles and swinging their long clubs with a reckless abandon that left the bystanders breathless and gasping. It was polo at its best, played at a furious tempo.

"Isn't it glorious!" shouted Audrey to Lord Mark over the din and confusion of the stampede that seemed to be bearing right down upon them.

Even as she spoke, one of the riders a little more reckless than the others, pulled his horse up with a mad jerk, preparatory to a daring wheel. By a miscalculation the horse failed of his turn and, rearing wildly, came down with a sickening crash on the rail against which Audrey and Lord Mark were pressing. Audrey never got the full sense of her own danger, which she escaped by Lord Mark's quick action and presence of mind. She was conscious only of the look in the eyes of the man who seemed about to be hurtled to his death, then of a huddled heap lying at her feet and the scream and cries of a horse struggling in agony close by. The crowd surged up and Lord Mark drew Audrey, trembling and white, away from the scene. She refused to leave the Club, however, till definite news was given out that the injured man was in no danger, but was suffering only from some broken bones.

This was the first really dramatic event that had ever confronted Audrey. Eleanor knew the minute she reached home that something out of the ordinary had happened. Audrey's eyes looked strained and there were queer little lines about her mouth that gave her a drawn look. Eleanor met her in the hall. "What is it?" she asked hurriedly.

"A nasty mix-up at the game," explained Lord Mark. "A young chap called Ted Gibson was thrown—landed on his head—horse took the side rail like a hurdle. Oh, no! not killed, just shaken up, I guess."

"Ted Gibson!" exclaimed Eleanor, "I had no idea he was at the Pier. I remember him as a youngster, and a lovable one."

Audrey had said nothing.

"Did it frighten you, dear?" asked Eleanor; then drew her upstairs as she saw the tears trembling in the depths of the dark eyes.

The accident made a terrible impression on Audrey. The fact that the man might have been killed then and there haunted her to the exclusion of everything else. The thought of death was not a new one to her, for Audrey had always dwelt too much on the serious phases of existence, but it was death that comes at the end of old age or a protracted illness. The brilliant, spectacular sort that swoops down upon youth even as it exults in living, was a new phase that frightened her as she contemplated it. It was only natural, therefore, that the man who had been instrumental in inducing this new line of thought should have made an indelible impression upon Audrey's sensitive little soul. For a week after the accident she went about as in a daze, and no amount of distraction could dispel her gloom.

The papers, in the meantime, kept people well informed as to the progress of the young polo player. As is so often the case with heroes of the athletic world, his injuries were not up to the spectacular event that produced them, resolving themselves simply into a broken collar bone and a few bruises.

It was at her own dance, given at the end of the season, that Audrey and Ted finally met. They met as old friends. Audrey put her hand in his; only the tremor in her voice betrayed her excitement as she said: "We have met before."

She was made very happy by his reply, which showed he remembered her distinctly:

"A rather rough beginning, wasn't it? And a very narrow escape for you."

He smiled down at her, but the person next in line was pressing forward.

"A bientôt," he said, and pressed on.

That was all, but Audrey felt herself a-quiver with the infinite possibilities the evening presented.

Eleanor watched the meeting keenly, and sighed a little as she caught the warmth in her daughter's eyes. The fact that Audrey made no comment on the subject, after the reception was over, in no way helped Eleanor's uneasiness.

"You're dancing the first dance with Lord Mark, aren't you?" she asked casually.

Audrey demurred a little.

"Must I?" she said.

Eleanor showed her surprise.

"Must!" she repeated, "of course not, Audrey. Do as you please."

At which Audrey laughed.

"Of course it will be Lord Mark," she said gaily. "I was joking. Only—" and here she showed a slight pause. "I hope people won't think it means anything, because it *doesn't*."

She said the last almost defiantly, as she turned to Lord Mark, who sauntered up leisurely to claim what had always been his undisputed right.

Later, Audrey and Ted were sitting together on the terrace that overlooked the ocean. There had been a dance, a very vivid one, and Audrey welcomed the night air to cool her cheeks. It was very quiet outside, for most of the revellers were contented to stay within. Only the ceaseless murmur of the waves against the cliffs and the suction of the outgoing tide disturbed the stillness.

"Shall we go down to the sea wall?" he asked, and she nodded in assent.

Down by the water they sat and talked. There was something about the still, moonlit night that sanctioned an intimacy of conversation that years of formal meetings would have failed to effect. Audrey told Ted all the terrors his accident had aroused in her, and he was very tender of her confidence.

"But you must not think of death and those things, Audrey." They had slipped quite simply into the use of each other's names. "Think about how wonderful it is to be alive!"

She smiled up at him at that.

"Yes," she admitted, "it *is* wonderful." Then, with a change of thought, "Why is it that you have kept away from Newport all summer?"

"I don't know. I should not have, had I known—" She liked the way his voice tapered off into silence. Words, after all, were the crudest of mediums.

They talked of horses.

"You ride," he said. "I have seen pictures of you—"

"Really?" she asked. "But I am a sorry horsewoman. To be frank, I am afraid of horses."

"I don't believe it," he said.

"It's true!" she persisted. "I have never admitted it before—but—you see, I ride just badly enough so that people think I ride awfully well, provided only I can control the expression of my face."

He enjoyed that. "You jump—?"

"Never more than a three-foot hurdle."

"I must teach you," he put in.

Audrey looked up at the moon and sighed. "Ah, but the season is over. Don't you feel it in the air? I hate the end of anything—finality—"

"There you are again," he put in with a laugh. "I won't .et you talk that way."

She liked the idea of his assuming a certain dictatorship over her.

"Besides, things are just beginning—for us."

He looked into her moonlit eyes as he said it. She closed them as he looked, as if afraid of the revelation he might find there.

"You are from Philadelphia," she said at last, as she opened her eyes again, and they both laughed at the absurd inappropriateness of the remark, as a sequel to the exchange of looks.

"An accusation?" he said lightly. "I plead guilty."

But there *was* a thought connection, which Audrey hastened to explain. "If you are to be in Philadelphia, why isn't *it*—this, I mean—you and I—at an end?"

"Ah! but I'm to go into the New York office—don't you see?"

Audrey did see, and it was all a part of a larger vision of the future that seemed to unfold itself gently as she looked at the man beside her. She saw him as the one she must grow to love, surely and inevitably, the great passion of her life. She shut her eyes quickly and rose almost with trepidation.

"You will let me see you in town?" he was asking.

It seemed hardly possible to her that he should need the assurance of her slight answer "Of course."

Audrey Bleecker, through the very fact of her isolated childhood, had been prone to an introspection that made her old beyond her years, though it in no way affected her childish impulses. She reasoned things out always, even in her doll days. Discovering once that her pet doll, Amaluka (nobody had ever determined the origin of the name) was nothing but a composite of sawdust and cloth, Audrey had quite viciously thrown her out of the window, and no one had ever been able to induce her to look at poor Amaluka again.

Audrey, at a very early age, had thought much about her mother and father. Her refusal to see Morgan indicated her line of thought. When she had told Eleanor in Yokohama that she had worked out to her own satisfaction the subject of matrimony she did not explain that her conclusions were based entirely on shrewd guesses as to the reasons for the strained relations existing between her mother and father.

Eleanor had been left an orphan at a very early age, and was singularly destitute of all close relatives. So Audrey had never met any one of her mother's family. She reasoned, as a result, that Eleanor had lacked social position and had married either for the Bleecker name or the Bleecker wealth. The three years abroad, when Audrey realized the possibilities of love and tenderness in her mother's nature, but strengthened this opinion formulated during her earlier years. Eleanor's life seemed to her an incomplete one and she had wept often to herself at the waste of it. She saw her mother following one whim after another, a prey to unrest, and set it down to the fact that real love had never been hers. Eleanor, as she and Audrey sat often in the twilight hand in hand talking in low voices, was quite unknowing of the fact that she was an object of infinite pity. She had yet to learn that Audrey's devotion was stronger in that it was not unquestioning.

Eleanor's support of Lord Mark had strengthened Audrey's idea of her mother's ambitious nature.

"But why—" Audrey asked herself—"since she herself has proved the hollowness of a loveless life? That was the point she quite failed to grasp. But the more she floundered about, seeking to justify her mother's conduct in one way or another, struggling to lay the doubts that came to torment her, the stronger grew her determination to act for herself at any cost to the triumph of love and a marriage of choice.

So it was, when Ted Gibson came to her with all his reckless young animalism and lovable daring, Audrey, through the very excess of thought on the subject of love, was the more susceptible to impression, and gave herself up the more readily to the experience with all its promise of ineffable sweetness.

Yet, in the early part of the winter that followed their meeting, Audrey contrived it so that she never saw Ted alone. It was as if she wished to become acquainted with him through the medium of others before entering into an intimacy that might preclude perspective. Or it might be, she felt her nature was incapable of taking the full force of the experience at once, but needed a preparation of the nicest graduation.

So she learned to see Ted as others saw him. He was an unconscious ego, the sort that rules by instinct, not by any aggressive self-assertion. He ruled by his charm and by his very changeableness. For he was changeable, immensely so, and followed his vagaries

at random. He loved sport. He was popular with the men; the women adored him. He was lovable, unquestionably, and carried everything before him through the very force of his unreliability. Audrey saw him as he was, but the glow in her heart was in no way diminished by her recognition of his shortcomings. She loved him the more, perhaps, because of them, with the true perversity of her sex.

There were times, however, when Audrey found herself the victim of a most unhappy depression. She tried to throw it off, ignore it, as if the very recognition of its existence was a sacrilege against the feeling that should make for unalloyed content.

She recalled her words to Lord Mark about jealousy. But no! This could not be jealousy, for Ted so obviously singled her out as the object of his special devotion. Then, what was it? In a vague sort of way she connected it with the life she was leading, with the people they were brought in daily contact with. It was as if the world had suddenly too many people. She felt herself oppressed by too great a variety of impressions, the confused shadow of which seemed to fall between her and the man she loved.

So, at a dance one night, when Ted broke out against the barrage of convention that held them apart, she was ready to meet the justice of his plea that he see her alone.

"Hang it all, Audrey," he said, "you've kept me on the rack long enough. I want to see *you*. Can't you understand? Without so much entourage?"

He smiled down at her. As she met almost timidly the grey eyes bent so meaningly upon her, he pressed her to him.

"You *do* understand, don't you, dear?" he said, and brushed lightly with his lips her dark hair.

After that she saw him alone, riding, driving, walking, at tea in the dusk of the big drawing-room. It was then, apart from the world with its confusion of interests, that Audrey found love as she had expected to find it, the sweeter, too, for its slow development. Love to Audrey was as a sacred rite, and undue precipitation would have argued lack of reverence. Ted, with all the impetuosity of his nature, was shrewd enough to realize this and to subdue his love-making to suit her delicate sensibilities. Then, of course, for a man of Ted's make-up, there are always diverse outlets for his emotions; if he resorted to any of these it in no way would indicate infidelity to Audrey, whom he was seeking in all good faith for his lawful wife.

Ted was in love with Audrey; of money and position equal to hers, he could not be accused of any material motives. He had recognized in the beginning her strange lure and realized the intensity of passion she was capable of. Her surrender would be all the sweeter for the modesty of her yielding. She was exactly the sort of woman for a man of Ted's position to love, honor and marry, and to be faithful to —in a way.

So the affair progressed with its lights and shadows in the making. Society, having duly sanctioned Lord Mark's claim, was a bit disconcerted at finding on a sudden a new suitor in the field. Disconcerted, but thrilled somewhat at the prospect of complications! Lord Mark was still on hand, having taken up his quarters for the winter at the Ritz. People looked to Eleanor for indication as to which side it was politic to support. But there again Society was baffled and soon merged its interest in Audrey's choice into an excited debate as to what under the heavens had come over her mother. For Eleanor, for the first time in her life, was opening herself to *real* gossip.

CHAPTER X

As Audrey's affair with Ted had progressed during the winter there had come over Eleanor a strange transformation. It had come so gradually that her best friends had been unaware of it, until suddenly they awoke to its full

presence. It was as if a beautiful piece of pottery in a rare collection were suddenly discovered at a sale price in a shop window. Only then would discussion arise as to its genuineness and intrinsic value. So with Eleanor. She had risen above question always until she presented herself in a new guise that could not but provoke doubt as to her right to have escaped criticism so long. There is nothing that arouses a keener antagonism among people who consider themselves connoisseurs than the knowledge that they have been fooled; their revenge is apt to be inexorable.

It was at a dinner that the revelation of Eleanor as an ordinary mortal subject to natural laws was made. It would seem almost that she herself pointed the way to the discovery. She was found guilty of a flirtation, so obvious it was absurd, with Elaine's new husband, Dick Balsh. Whoever could have dreamt of Eleanor being so little subtle? Particularly with Audrey but a little way down the line!

Dick had been drinking quite heavily, with the result of a bland, abstracted smile which provoked Eleanor's attention.

"A pleasing reminiscence of some wrongdoing, I wager, Dickie," she had said in a jocular vein quite foreign to her.

"Or the anticipation of it." He was not too drunk to see an opening.

Eleanor smiled into his heavy eyes. "You were quite wonderful at the meet yesterday. I made a special effort to get there—your spirals were dazzling—you dare so much."

"Too much, sometimes," he put in.

"A man never dares too much from a woman's viewpoint," she said quickly.

"Glittering generalities."

"On the contrary, a banal personality." She let her eyes linger in his.

At that point conversation started up on all sides to cover what pointed to a vulgar assignation. It was not so much what was said as the suggestion of tone in the brief exchange that startled people out of their usual rut of thought. Eleanor Bleecker and Dick Balsh! Preposterous!

Another lull revealed greater depths of perfidy. Eleanor and Dick had obviously closed for a lesson in aeroplaning. Elaine was dragged in now.

"I have provoked your husband into offering to take me up in his machine," Eleanor said, leaning over to attract Elaine's attention.

"Provoked!" protested Dick.

Elaine coolly ignored him. "Look out lest you fly too high and scorch your wings, Eleanor," she warned mockingly. "Old Sol is getting fairly hot these days."

"You're not discounting my pilot, I trust," said Eleanor brightly.

"I suspect she *is* implying things," said Dick.

"Heard calumnies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter," murmured Eleanor. "But don't you see? It's just because there *is* danger, Elaine, that—"

But Elaine had turned to Billy Severn, next to her, and did not hear. "Eleanor's eccentricities are becoming almost tiresome!" she exclaimed.

"But with it all, she manages to keep—er—a certain virtue—" Billy faltered with his eyes on Eleanor. He remembered quite distinctly the details of the winter he had spent under the Bleecker roof.

"Oh—does she?" wondered Elaine. "You know, I am inclined to doubt virtue except in last year's clothes and with a squint."

Billy burst out laughing. He knew quite well that Elaine was furious.

Her implication, however much he chose to discount it, interested him notwithstanding. "You are the first to dare indicate a doubt as to—" Billy started, his eyes resting curiously upon Eleanor.

"There has to be a pioneer in every field—a Columbus. The tradition of Columbus is still left us, is it not?"

"Oh, yes! The viewpoint has veered slightly, that's all. As some Frenchman says, 'Columbus showed Americans the way to Paris'."

Elaine looked at him quickly. "You

mean I am pointing out to you the way—"

Billy shrugged. Their eyes met.

"Are you betting?" she said coolly.

"No," he answered shortly, and there was that in his tone that pulled Elaine up short with the realization that she had been snubbed.

She was not without her following, however, and before the evening was over, the matter of Eleanor's flirtation took on ugly proportions.

Audrey had realized something was in the air. Even Lord Mark on the one side of her and Ted on the other were not sufficient to keep from her the basic fact that Eleanor had wrought in some way to the antagonism of those about her. When the dancing began, Audrey sought her mother out.

"I have a slight headache. Can't we steal away?"

But Eleanor was fixed in her determination to stay. "Mr. Balsh is telling me such interesting things about air craft. Do you mind, darling? You go. I shall stay a while."

Eleanor stayed, to the outrage of popular feeling. Even her hostess, Mrs. Duncan Edgemere, who refused to listen to gossip in the early part of the evening had to admit, when she saw Eleanor time after time glide by in the arms of Dick Balsh, that there *was* something to be said on Elaine's side.

Aeroplaning occupied Eleanor for at least a month. In that time she succeeded in alienating practically all her old friends and seemed to enjoy somewhat the fact that she was under the ban of disapproval. She and Dick met constantly; there were whispers of their being seen together in questionable places. Then suddenly they ceased to meet, to the notable lagging of Eleanor's interest in air craft.

If Eleanor's object had been simply to create a sensation, she had succeeded far beyond her expectations, for her flirtation with Dick was admittedly the most disconcerting, startling thing Society had had to face for years. It wasn't the flirtation *per se* that troubled people; it was the bearing it had on the character of the woman they had grown accustomed to think of as above any such dalliance. If only André had been there to blaze the trail for decisive action, but André was again in a sanitarium in Paris.

When the flirtation with Dick was over, there was a gasp of relief generally. Perhaps, it was all a mistake; perhaps it had never been at all, a chimera of Society's overwrought brain. Perhaps—

But even as people sought to pick up and blindly put together the pieces of their fallen idol, there came another crash that destroyed definitely all possibility of reconstruction. There was a raid of a well-known gambling house on Long Island. It was a place where the men of the distinctly fast set rubbed elbows with the *demi-mondaine;* no woman of the better sort was ever known to patronize it. The raid was a spectacular thing, its most spectacular feature being—to quote one of the daily papers—the presence of a very exclusive young Society matron, whose separation from her husband was a matter of note. The fact that the matter was hushed up very quickly, glossed over, as it were, but reduced Society to a more irate condition than ever. If Eleanor hadn't borne the Bleecker name, and if Audrey's presence hadn't acted as a deterrent, Society would have —But then *would* it? For, after all, there is a certain association connected with even the pieces of a thing once held sacred that renders the disposal of them an awkward business. It proved the more comfortable course in the end to ignore the whole wretched business, discuss the gambling fiasco impassionately and excuse one's self for condoning Eleanor by a pretense of ignorance in regard to her connection with it.

It proved Billy Severn was her partner in guilt. Of course every one knew Billy frequented that sort of place, but why involve Eleanor? A new opening for speculation! The events of the ensuing weeks made any conclusion

drawn from the connection seem not too rash.

It is possible that Elaine Balsh's quavering doubt as to Eleanor's virtue had aroused in Billy a curiosity that he must satisfy at any cost. It is possible Eleanor's former affection for Billy had suddenly kindled. "In the ashes live the wonted fires," as Mrs. Edgemere tritely put it. But whatever the cause, the two became engrossed in each other to the exclusion of everything else. Billy once again took up his quarters at the Morgan Bleecker establishment in Fifth Avenue, not even resorting to the usual subterfuge of telling people he was living at his club. Dick, in his affair with Eleanor, had talked; Billy did not; which might argue anything in regard to the success or the lack of success of each.

"The successful man doesn't talk," argued Mrs. Tony Winters.

"Exactly," agreed Jack Kingsley. "That's why he talks to discount his success!"

"Does a man ever want to discount his success with a woman?" she persisted.

"It depends upon the physical gauge of her nearest male relative," answered Jack. At which they both laughed with an eye to a recent scandal in their midst.

"The Atlantic has its advantages, of course," Mrs. Tony went on. "But Morgan never has had illusions as to Eleanor—"

"And Eleanor as to Morgan?" questioned Jack.

Mrs. Tony laughed. "Eleanor! She hasn't a shred of illusion about anything. She's plain experimentalist, that's all!"

Mrs. Tony's summary was the one finally adopted by all. Eleanor's erratic behavior was simply an amplification of the eccentricity that had given rise in earlier days to her adoption of the Hindoo. It was possible for one to read now a new meaning into those former vagaries of hers so smilingly indulged by all. Instead of the harmlessness of her early whims tinging her latter ones with the pale light of innocuousness, her early ones as viewed now by the lurid light thrown out by her latest ventures became so many evidences of a depraved nature. Eleanor was now pronounced the sort of woman who, having gone through life with a certain show of respectability, suddenly breaks away from all restraint and shows herself as she is, blatantly defiant of opinion. She might almost be accused of going to pieces, so marked were the evidences of the disintegration of the character. She cheapened herself in every respect, willfully it would seem.

With the wearing off of the old reserve, there was discovered underneath, not the woman of fine fibre that had always been taken for granted, but a creature of shoddy mould and tawdry instincts, who violated every tradition of the best Society. Of course, there were dozens of women just like her, even in the inner circle, but these, never having lived up to anything better, could not be condemned as having fallen short. After all, depth is a comparative term; Eleanor's sin was that she had climbed so high in the beginning.

However, people decided to wait for André before taking any active measures in regard to the matter. Suspension of judgement does not argue a shirking of responsibility; rather a full sense of the weight of the problem being handled. In the meantime, there was a certain excitation and flutter of pulses to be had from the uncertainty involved. Society held up its hands with just the right degree of horror and thrilled to the occasion.

Then André came back. The most partial of his followers could not but admit the ravages wrought by his dissoluteness. But what did it matter, considering it was André? That was at the end of the winter season, when the pulse of festivity is low and the need of stimulation of one sort or another is most keenly felt. André's coming gave the necessary *flair* and dinner dates again became matters of vital interest. Mrs. Tony scored, by getting

cards out for the first night of his arrival.

It proved a gorgeous affair. In extending the proper welcome to André, all forgot for the moment the petty jealousies and animosities that the flagging season always breeds, and joined to give the occasion the éclat suitable to the guest of honor. Eleanor and Elaine, Mrs. Tony and Mrs. Duncan Edgemere reigned, the controlling spirits.

As André's steamer made her dock only a few hours before the dinner, no opportunity was given anyone to communicate to him the astounding facts of Eleanor's recent ventures. Each was waiting with a sort of greedy avidity for one of those moments of tête-à-tête intimacy into which any big affair eventually resolves, moments precious for the revelations they invite. The absorbing question was, of course, who would get possession of André first.

The dinner had hardly got under weigh, however, before it was obvious to all that André, with his usual swift perception, had sensed the thing uppermost in the minds of all. He had looked very keenly at Eleanor directly after they had seated themselves. Her flushed face and eager eyes, the garrulity that increased as the dinner wore on, told the story. The onlookers who watched André's scrutiny could not tell what to read into the expression that came into his eyes. That he had guessed the truth of her disintegration was evident from the insolence of his bearing to her, in marked contrast to that quiet deference that she had previously been able to exact. This delighted everyone, though in a way it drew the sting from the anticipated after dinner gossip.

At the end of the dinner, André seemed unable to control his exploitation of Eleanor as she presented herself in this new guise, and baffled speculation as to just what line he really was adopting. Was it that he was trying to expose the lady at her worst? Or could it be he was throwing down the gauntlet to all in her defense?

Mrs. Tony looked wise. "But André would never lose his head over a woman Eleanor's age. It's just that he sees an opening to furnish good sport for all of us. Wait and see."

Still it was puzzling.

"We're counting on you in Newport this summer, André?" said Jack Kingsley.

"Of course," André's treble quieted a little the hum of conversation.

"Where are you going to stay?" asked Jack.

"With Eleanor," answered André quietly. The voices still talking were curbed up short.

Everyone showed surprise, Eleanor not the least. She leaned over and her eyes met André's. There was that in them that stirred her to a defiance that prompted surrender as the nicest challenge. She looked, deeply flushed in spite of herself, and then shrugged.

"*Dieu dispose*," she said lightly.

Elaine Balsh could not let the opportunity go. "In what capacity, André?"

It was André's turn to shrug now. He was at a high tension. He himself realized, if others failed to, that his *flairs* of wit were more fitful than of yore. He tired easily. He was tired now to the point of irritability.

"Oh, what you will!" he said carelessly. "Eleanor, perhaps needs a biographer."

"Pen and ink are too dull a medium," protested Mrs. Edgemere.

"Write it in phosphorus, André," cried Mrs. Tony, "on the wall!"

"To the destruction of the curious who try to read," said André.

Elaine shook her head. "The real danger is to the one who writes. Fooling with explosives—"

André shoved back his chair.

"We're getting tiresome," he said.

For once in his career he had failed to score and the note of peevishness in his voice showed that he got the full sense of his failure.

"He *has* declared for Eleanor," announced Elaine stoutly afterwards, but

Mrs. Tony still protested, "Wait and see!"

CHAPTER XI

THE summer that followed was an eventful one, in that Society, with André as ringmaster, outdid itself in extravagant absurdities. Newport, Bar Harbour, Narragansett—yes, particularly Narragansett, echoed with a gaiety neatly graduated from harmless mirth to extreme debauchery. "There were sounds of ribaldry by night," to quote André himself, sounds unheard before even in these fairly sophisticated localities. For André was of unparalleled ingenuity that could evolve the most startling of programs. He stayed with Eleanor—her Boswell he was styled after the exchange at Mrs. Tony's dinner. As it was Bleecker money for the most part that made his wild achievements possible, sentence in regard to Eleanor was again postponed. Besides, one never strains a point in the summer season; ethical codes should be packed away in moth balls with winter furs.

But if André's attitude toward Eleanor puzzled Society, Eleanor's attitude puzzled André. She seemed to delight in flaunting the intimacy between them before all the world. In the quiet of a tête-à-tête, however, she held him off with a coolness that seemed not fair, considering the lengths to which she provoked him in public. The wildest of revels would end in the most formal exchange of good-nights, always in presence of the inevitable footman waiting up for them. Sometimes Audrey was a third, and this, too, precluded any dalliance. André had realized in the beginning that Eleanor, in some mysterious way, had forfeited the social supremacy of her earlier days, but so keen was that old curiosity in regard to her that he was willing to jeopardize his own social position to satisfy it. He threw out the extravagant orgies of the season as so many sops to Cerberus, knowing full well that, after all, he was simply playing for time. Eleanor's indifference, therefore, piqued him the more, in that he realized to the full what he was losing by identifying himself with her. Already Elaine Balsh was showing her disfavor and—

Strange incongruity of circumstances when André le Conte should suffer through his association with Eleanor Bleecker!

"What has brought the change in Eleanor?" Mrs. Duncan Edgemore had asked him straight one day.

"Four years of the devoted mother rôle proved too boring, I take it," he said. "The outbreak was inevitable."

Mrs. Edgemere drew her own conclusions as to the implication in the term "outbreak."

Yet again, one day at Elaine's at tea, André is quoted as having said—"The most despicable thing in the world is the woman who leads a man on and then makes a show of righteous wrath when he attempts to kiss her."

"It isn't done," murmured Mrs. Tony. "A woman does not exist this bad."

"Your faith in your own sex is too sweet," interpolated Jack Kingsley. André became vague and enigmatical after that, but the remark proved the starting point for much speculation. Betting in regard to the real relation between Eleanor and André stood about fifty-fifty.

In the meantime, life with Eleanor was far from resolving itself into a simple equation. As far back as the West Indies trip she had realized that André was peculiarly drawn toward her, drawn as only a man of his intricate make could be, with a combination of intellectual curiosity and sensuous desire that is as difficult to combat as it is subtle. She had baffled him then, a feat far more difficult of accomplishment now in the face of his increasing degeneration and her own lack of reserve. In his cool statement, "I am going to stay with Eleanor," she had recognized at once the latent challenge. She had sprung to meet it readily. Why? To prove her impregnability the

more, in proportion to the increase of the danger involved? Or could it be she knew that intimacy with a man of this sort must needs create a pseudo-excitement that would help feed her restlessness? Why was it, really?

One night toward the end of the summer season, Eleanor and André were coming home from a ball. Audrey had left earlier. There was that in André's attitude as he lounged close to her that made Eleanor realize she had provoked him this time a little too much. But he said nothing, only looked at her in the dim light, unwaveringly, insolently.

Eleanor closed her eyes and confessed to fatigue.

As they were going up the steps, André turned, "Send the man to bed, Eleanor," he said, "and come into the drawing room."

She sighed wearily and shook her head. Then as quickly she took the sudden decision to do as he asked, to see the thing through.

"That will do, James," she said. "No, nothing more. Good-night," and the next minute found herself face to face with André under the glaring light of the drawing room chandelier.

"What is it?" she asked coolly.

André had thrown off his coat and was leaning against the centre table with his arms folded. Their eyes met, then Eleanor's went down at the look she read in his. She turned unsteadily with a deep glow in her cheeks, but before she had taken a step, André had her in his arms. She started to struggle away from him, then, devitalizing herself, lay limp and passive in his arms while he kissed her. Then, as if his nerves cried out at the torture of it, he threw her from him in trembling exasperation.

"By God, Eleanor!" he cried. "You're not playing fair. You lead me on, flaunt me as your lover before every one—yes, even Audrey—and this is all. If it's a game you're playing, for God's sake tip me—I—I can't stand this—"

His voice rose to a higher pitch than usual, ending almost in a whine. He put out his hand unsteadily to the table for support. The years had not been kind to André. His obesity was getting the better of him, steadily, ruthlessly, and his little eyes showed ineffectually weak for all the evil in their depths.

He read, perhaps, something of her thoughts as she stood there with her cool scrutiny. Again he made a feint to take her in his arms, but she evaded him.

"No, no, André!" she protested, and this time the trembling of her voice belied her outward calm. "Not now! Tomorrow, perhaps! Yes, tomorrow I shall explain—everything! No! No! I— Yes—tomorrow— It's not fair, I know, I know—"

She poured out her words incoherently, all the while backing to the door. Once there, she turned, and with a shivering sob fled out into the hall and up the stairs.

She reached her own room, and once inside locked it. It seemed the evil in André's eyes had pursued her the whole dark length of the great stairs. Still weeping and trembling she switched on the light. Then going to her dresser she opened a drawer and drew from it a miniature. It was a picture of her husband, painted in the first days of their marriage. The eyes that looked up at her were eager and trusting. There was in them a vivid and intense sense of the present, which seemed strong and full, as if it could never pass away. Then her eyes lifted to a picture on the wall. Morgan with his quizzical gaze and cynical doubt of everything! With a hysterical cry she threw the miniature from her. The glass of the case broke with a queer shattering sound. Eleanor shuddered, then with a sharp cry threw herself on the bed and gave herself up to her weeping.

A few minutes later she heard steps in the hall. André was her first confused thought. She sat up trembling, dazed, and hurriedly switched off the light. As the footsteps came closer she recognized them as Audrey's. They stopped outside the door and there was

a gentle knock, then the trying of the door-knob and Audrey's quiet but insistent voice, *"Maman, maman!"*

A second's hush as of someone intensely listening, then again the call *"Maman, maman!"* followed by the echo of the light footsteps dying away in the shadows of the great hall.

CHAPTER XII

The change in Eleanor had brought the most poignant suffering to Audrey. Her naturally quick perceptions were sharpened to even greater keenness in regard to anything touching her mother because of the intense love she bore her. It was Audrey who had noted first the letdown of that reserve that had always been Eleanor's distinctive feature in her relations with the world. She had followed her mother's disintegration step by step with a wild protest in her heart against the condition she believed to have caused it. For Audrey still clung to her belief that, had Eleanor married for love, her nature would have responded fully, to the working out of everything that was fine and good in her.

Audrey felt at times that possibly her own absorption in Ted had something to do with Eleanor's strange perversities. She would seek her mother out time and again, "We see so little of each other now," she would plead.

But Eleanor would only shake her head. "It's to be expected, now you're safely launched, dear!" was the invariable answer. "Dinner together? Not tonight, I am dining out. Tomorrow, maybe!"

The tomorrow never came, so that Audrey found herself helpless in stemming the tide of estrangement that had set in. Yet she knew Eleanor's love for her was as strong and fine as it had ever been in the old days of intimacy, when they had ridden out on the yellow Sahara together or sat at tea in the wistaria shadows of Yokahama.

Her own love affair with Ted, still progressing by imperceptible degrees that lent to it a sense of security, was often tinged with sadness as she contrasted her own happy lot with the bareness of her mother's existence. Perhaps it was because Eleanor realized the ineffable beauty of real love as she watched it in the making, that she resorted in bitterness to the idle flirtations that now made up her life. That they were but idle flirtations Audrey never doubted for the moment. Her trust in the basic good of her mother's nature never wavered, though appearances often would have justified utter loss of faith. She followed sadly the affair with Dick, then that with Billy. After the removal to Newport, it had seemed to her at first that she could not quite bear the ignominy of André's affair with her mother. Her dislike for André had never abated from the time she had struck out at him so wildly on the yacht. André felt her hatred always, and obtruded himself very little upon her, though he did seem to flaunt his intimacy with Eleanor more noticeably in her presence.

If Audrey's determination to marry for love had not been clearly formulated before, the presence of André in the house would have cast it in definite mould. She turned the more surely to Ted as a result. Ted, too, had established quarters in Newport, to say nothing of Lord Mark, who was actuated not at all by any hope that Audrey would change her decision but by the desire for "another jolly season at the shore." Lord Mark, apparently, harbored no animosity in regard to the very obvious success of the newer-comer, for he and Ted proved capital friends.

So the season wore on. It was not until the night when André had attempted to force Eleanor into an acceptance of himself in the rôle of lover that there was any open admission between Ted and Audrey of the love that had been growing up between them. Audrey had been tired and Ted had suggested that a walk home in the air was the very thing to rest her. It was moonlight and the two young people sauntered arm and arm along the

deserted avenue. Little was said until they reached home and stood on the lawn facing the water.

"It was here a year ago," murmured Audrey, and before either was aware of what was happening, Ted had her in his arms. The kiss was the consummation of a perfect love and faith. They lingered only a moment afterwards, looking deep in each other's eyes and then it was over, unspoiled by the medium of words. It seemed to Audrey that night as she looked out over the moonlit ocean that she could have wept from sheer ecstasy of the happiness in her heart. Hearing her mother come in later, she crept to her door. It seemed only right to share at once this great joy that had come to her. Hearing confused sounds within the room she had been startled, fearing Eleanor was ill. The unanswered knock and call left her uneasy. It was as if suddenly the life had gone out of her happiness and she felt a strange apprehension and chill. After the second call the tears stole into her eyes and lonely and forlorn she crept back to her own room.

Eleanor kept her room the next day, refusing on the plea of neuralgia to see even Audrey. In the afternoon Ted called to see her, but she denied him, too. Audrey stole down instead and there were a few happy moments by the side of the log fire in the library.

"It is chilly out today," said Ted, making conversation for the sake of the redoubtable James who lingered unconscionably. Then with the closing of the door, he put out his arms and Audrey came to them with a great light in her eyes.

"You *do* love me, Audrey?" he said tenderly.

"You know it—better than any one else in the world and I shall always love you," she said softly, and sighed as if with the weight of a great responsibility.

But he laughed at that. "Come, is it so serious?" he said playfully.

"Yes," she answered thoughtfully.

Then after a pause, "I think, sometimes, I expect too much."

It was as if the shadow of last night's unsatisfied confidence were still upon her.

"Not more than I can give you—" he met her seriousness in a tone of banter. Then seeing her droop a little. "You *will* marry me, darling?"

She evaded that a little and drew away. "You must speak to mother."

"I came for that."

"Yes, I know."

"But, Audrey, your mother wouldn't ever—I've sometimes fancied—"

She helped him out, "Fancied she wants Lord Mark."

"Yes," he admitted.

"She does," said Audrey. "And I can't understand it—because—" Her voice tapered to a point as if she could not find the words to fit the thought.

"But it won't make any difference—" Ted seized her hands now and held her firmly.

"She will reason with me," went on Audrey, "but the decision in the end will be mine."

At that he caught her in his arms again, as if he had somehow felt her slipping away from him. The kisses he pressed on her eyes and hair and lips were less tempered for the moment's uncertainty she had given him.

So they lingered, aglow with their happiness, till the dying light told them it was growing late.

At last Audrey rose with a sigh.

"You must go," she said softly.

This time he did not kiss her; he only took her hand and looked into the deep eyes that reflected the fire in the grate, yet were heavy with the shadows of the twilight.

"Till tomorrow!" he said, and her only answer was an echo to his words. "Till tomorrow!"

Audrey went to her own room and dressed for dinner. Then she stole quietly to her mother's door. To her surprise Eleanor's maid told her that Mrs. Bleecker had gone downstairs. Audrey hastened to go below. At the top of the stairs she encountered André,

so all possibility of a tête-à-tête with her mother was destroyed. They found Eleanor quite herself as far as ease and poise were concerned, but her face had a strained look, and for the first time Audrey had the sharp realization that her mother's beauty was partly due to the artifices of a clever maid. Tonight the rouge on the cheek bones was too obvious, the shadows under the incalculable eyes too heavy. Audrey felt unusually tender as she took her mother's hand.

"We'll stay at home together tonight," she murmured. Then still more softly, "I have something to tell you."

But Eleanor protested. "Ah, no! I have been in all day. It will do me good to get out. How about the balalaika concert for an hour?" She turned in appeal to André, who showed himself somewhat sullen.

"I promised to meet Kingsley at the Clam-Bake Club—" he muttered.

"Then we'll go, maman," put in Audrey quickly.

Eleanor knew, of course, as she and Audrey sat hand in hand at the concert, what it was Audrey had to communicate. She got it all too surely from the warm response of the hand held in hers, from the look of rapt happiness in the eyes that yet seemed wistfully sad. She had seen this coming, of course. Well, she was really to meet it. Strange as it would seem her thoughts flew to her last interview with her husband and she smiled almost sardonically at the recollection of his words, "The martyr enjoys his crown of thorns!"

Was Morgan justified by any chance in his cynicism? She had been playing a game. Had it been that she was actuated entirely by her love for Audrey?

Again Morgan's words echoed, "In search for a sensation newer than the last."

She sighed deeply. Audrey leaned towards her with a question in her eyes.

"Yes, let's go home," said Eleanor. "I'm more tired than I realized."

In the carriage they said nothing. When they reached home, Audrey pleaded, "Upstairs, it's cozier."

But Eleanor led the way to the library. "There's a fire here," she said. She turned out all the lights but one, leaving the room in semi-darkness. Through the half-opened doors that led to the conservatory there came the quiet plash of a fountain and the flutter of a bird disturbed in its night's rest.

Audrey threw off her cloak. She would have liked to put her arms about her mother's neck, to have poured out wildly, chaotically the happiness that was hers, but there was something in Eleanor's eyes that imposed a restraint that held her back.

Eleanor stood by the mantel; Audrey leaned against the arms of the big divan that flanked the fireplace. "*Maman*," Audrey began, "Ted came to see you today."

"Yes. I know," said Eleanor.

"He wants to marry me."

Eleanor said nothing. She took a cigarette from her case and started to light it. Her indifference goaded Audrey to a sudden anger and a desire to make a stand for her identity.

"I know you want me to marry Lord Mark," she said. "But I intend to marry Ted." Then she weakened.

"Oh, *maman!*" she cried. "Can't you see? You, *you* have suffered. Your life has been wasted. Why do you want *me* to waste mine, too? Position, what does it count? What has it done for you?"

Eleanor's indifference was suddenly arrested as Audrey poured out her appeal. She took a step forward, a strange light of incredulity in her eyes. For a full minute she said nothing. Then—

"Audrey—you mean—you don't know," she stammered. "Ah! I had never thought of that. You think *I* married for position. *I*—"

She put her hands up to her head as she could not think for the throbbing of her temples. Then all the carefully calculated reserve of the woman gave way.

"Money—position," she cried wild-

ly. "You think I married for that." She laughed a little and then caught herself up with a sob. "God knows I wish I had. But it was for love, *love,* I married. Can't you see, Audrey? And I want to save you from what I suffered —from what every woman suffers who—" Again her voice broke. "Love —it's too big a thing, too cruel a thing! Ah—"

She shuddered a little and fell back a step. "It brings out what is worst in us—what is smallest in us. Love, jealousy, anger—they've the same source. Stir one and you rouse the violence of them all. I expected too much. I demanded too much, because I—I *loved* too much."

She gave a deep-drawn sigh. "I would have had him *all, entirely,* myself, and he was the lovable sort the world will not leave alone. We loved and fought and scarred—"

She had quieted a little as she talked, her first wild incoherence merging into the sadness of reminiscence. She gazed straight ahead of her, a strange smile on her drawn face.

She had quite forgotten Audrey until a shivering little sob, breaking the tense stillness of the room, brought the full sense of her presence. With a great compassion she sank on her knees by the couch, taking Audrey in her arms, a huddled heap.

"Audrey, darling! I left him because I loved him, and that's the secret of my whole wretched, wasted life. And I determined to work from the beginning to save you. I didn't want you to learn to care for anyone. That's why—old Nana—you remember? I sent her away. And I didn't want you to love me—that's why I saw so little of you in the beginning. Then, then, when I found you were the sort that *must* love, I took you away to make you care for me to the point of letting *me* mark out your life for you. I should have known it impossible. In Yokohama—when you said you'd worked it all out. I saw what was coming. But for a while I had hopes of Lord Mark. Then—Ted came with his easy charm—"

Audrey had been weeping bitterly. She was conscious at first only of the tragedy she was glimpsing in her mother's soul. Then had come weak despair and a sick helplessness with the realization that that tragedy must of necessity bear upon her own future.

At the mention of Ted, her sobs became more violent.

"Ah, no, no!" she cried in protest, as at some brute conviction being forced upon her. "I can't. I love him so! I love him so!"

Eleanor sighed as she rose wearily. "Listen, Audrey." She was quite calm now. "Lord Mark—what would your life with him mean? You're fond of him in a way. You're companionable. You'd go through life untouched by the big passions. There'd be no jealousies, because you wouldn't *care* enough. You remember his Gaiety girl—how we laughed about it! But if Ted—"

"Ah, no, no!" Audrey moaned pitifully.

"I thought so," said Eleanor quietly. "I know nothing about him, now. He loves you, I think, as much as a man of that type can love, as much as your father loved me. But the world lies in wait always for men like that; Ted's future is inevitable—

"And listen, Audrey. If you marry Lord Mark—your children—they can never make you suffer as I am suffering now, for you will care only indifferently. And oh, Audrey, then, there will be no unrest and striving—you can give the world the best that's in you for there will be no violence of emotion to sap your good impulses."

Audrey's only answer was her sobbing. Eleanor breathed deeply as if in despair of accomplishing her end. Then she went on.

"I have lived the wrong life, Audrey. I kept it all from you at first; lately I have made no concealments. But—" here she gave a strained little laugh. "I thought you knew always my marriage had been one of love. And yet, how should you? But it was the one big fact of my life and I thought

somehow you knew. It seems I have been working against my own ends."

She put her hand over her eyes and thought a minute. "But it's not too late; no, it's not too late. Audrey, you have seen me this last year as I am, living as hundreds of women are living, to lose the sense of their disillusions. *It is the woman who marries for love who is the derelict.*"

Audrey's sobs had gradually ceased. She sat up now, still trembling.

"I know—I know you are doing it for the best," she said, "but I can't give up. I am willing to suffer for my love. And *you*, though you have lived this way, you, your real self, are still untouched. It is all a-seeming; the best in you has not been destroyed—"

There was a note of perfect faith in the low voice; a light of trusting love in the dark eyes raised to hers.

Eleanor drew herself up as for one last supreme effort.

"You say," she said quietly, "that I have been true to my higher self. Ah, Audrey—how can a woman be true to herself when she has had lover after lover—"

Audrey gave a sharp little cry, and as she recoiled there was a look of terror on her face. "I don't believe it—you are doing that to force me—You can't shake my faith in you—" But already her quavering voice showed a lack of conviction.

Eleanor shrugged and turned away, "It's André now."

"No, no! No, no!" cried Audrey in a frenzy. I *won't* believe it. I won't—"

But Eleanor was ready for her.

"Last night when you came to my room—" she said slowly.

Audrey cowered as if she had been struck.

There was a second's silence, broken by a little whimper as of a wounded animal in pain.

Eleanor shuddered imperceptibly.

"Disillusion is a bitter thing," she said softly. "There will be many in your life, Audrey, if—if—"

She put out her hand in appeal to the girl trembling before her, and took a step forward. But Audrey shrank from her touch. The two faced each other wide-eyed. Then Audrey turned and staggered weakly out of the room.

CHAPTER XIII

Eleanor closed her eyes, and, shivering as if with a sudden chill, leaned against the mantel. When the echo of Audrey's faltering steps had died away, she opened her eyes again. There in the door, leading to the conservatory, stood André, anger and desire struggling for mastery in his evil countenance.

"So that's your game!" he cried. "Well—by God, I think I'll tell Audrey—"

She put up her hand quickly to check his loud tones, and as they stood there face to face a door shut upstairs. There was a note of dull finality in the sound. Eleanor swayed slightly, then bracing herself turned to André whose anger had suddenly subsided. In its place was a strange mood she could not read. As his eyes rested upon her she turned away uneasily; she had expected somehow merely a repetition of the scene of the other night; instead there was this—this indefinable thing far more horrible.

"You heard everything?" she asked.

"Yes," he said.

"You know what it will mean? The ultimatum is about to descend upon me. It will include you, too, if—if—"

He twisted his mouth into a smile, the same rapt look in his eyes.

"There is always the Riviera, the Elysian Fields for social outcasts."

Eleanor sighed. "I am getting bored. I—I want something new."

That brought him out of his daze, and he seized her by the wrists, forcing her to meet his eyes. "No, no! Don't say that! It's not because you're bored. You're doing it for Audrey's sake! for Audrey's sake! Look at me! Yes, I have known it all along. You're the same Eleanor as in the old days of your supremacy—the same fine, beautiful spirit—"

A ray of hope had flashed to her at his words, extinguished on the sudden by the look in his eyes.

"I—I don't understand," she faltered. "You mean—"

"I mean," he said, and as he spoke he drew her slowly into his arms with a deliberation that bespoke the greater intensity for the restraint imposed, "I mean, it will be such a—" He sighed as if incapable of taking in fully the rapture of it, "Such a beautiful sacrilege."

This time she did not shrink as he pressed his lips to hers. Only, the eyes closed wearily.

CHAPTER XIII

Two weeks later Morgan Bleecker was sitting at his desk in his banking house in Paris. There were two letters open before him. One was from Audrey, the second communication he had ever received from her. She stated that she was to marry Marcus Belgrave, Lord Tresham, and hoped in a formal manner that the engagement would meet with approval and sanction. At the end was a postscript. "Sometime, after I am married and adjusted to my new life, I hope we may meet. I may have a clearer vision then." That was all. The other was a communication from Eleanor. Morgan lingered over this sadly.

"If it had been anybody but André le Conte—" he muttered, as he shaded his eyes that continued to look fixedly into space.

MOODS

By Kirah Markham

STARS on a rainy night
Like candles newly lit—
Rain in the river bed
That the summer drought left dry—
Dreamings nor sad nor bright
Through my longing fancy flit
Of an old love that is dead,
And a new love that may die.

'TIS true that men often owe much of their success and fame to their wives. I have often wondered just how much Xantippe contributed to making Socrates a great philosopher.

FIRST love is best because it is inspired. After that one has to rely on technique.

ARISTIPPUS

By John McClure

THIS befell the apostle Timotheus somewhile after the crucifixion, and has not yet been recorded in a book.

A man of Syracuse, named Aristippus, who had laughed at the world, fell sick of a sudden and died. And the flock of Timotheus, who was then in Syracuse a-preaching, demanded that he lift up this man from the dead. So Timotheus went forthwith to the tomb, accompanied by the believers, who had seen him do such things before. And he stood solemnly before the tomb, exorcising the devils and the darker angels, and ordered this man to arise.

"There is no death!" called Timotheus. "Arise, Aristippus!"

And after a moment there was a sound of rustling cerements within the tomb.

"In the name of the Father," cried Timotheus, "I command you awake! Come forth!"

Then those that were gathered about heard a sound of chuckling from within the tomb and were afraid.

"Come forth!" cried Timotheus. "Aristippus—you are there?"

"Ay."

"Come forth."

Then the door of the tomb was opened a hair's width.

"And why?" came the voice of Aristippus from within. "Why should I come forth?"

"In the name of the Father—"

"Tell me this," interrupted the sepulchral voice, "tell me this: Is the world as it was?"

"Even as it was," said Timotheus.

"And is Heliogargalus still governor of Syracuse? And is Menorchas still telling his stories at the sign of the Purple Cock? And do the asses bearing milk still bray along the street at five in the morning?"

"Ay," said Timotheus. "It is even as it was."

"And is Lucullus still the idol of the populace? And do they attend prayer-meetings on Wednesday night?"

"Ay," said Timotheus.

"And do men suffer still from gout and dysentery and fever and pox? And do they lie and pilfer and steal? And are they electing high priests?"

"They are electing high priests," said Timotheus.

"And Xantippe, my wife, and the children—they are still about the house?"

"Ay," said Timotheus. "It is even as it was."

"Brother," said Aristippus. "I like it here."

And the door of the tomb was drawn to.

THE PUNCH BOWL

By Alice Woods

I

OF course Ambrosia had not always been her name. And it's not true that there is nothing in a name, anyway. She knew. Often, when some fuddled man whispered "Ambrosia!" and then went on, "It's so wonderful that you, *you*, should have so perfect a name!" she'd smile and think of her mother and her mother's name, Sally, which was really her name, too. But men do so like to believe that the women they love were born the day they met them. Ambrosia knew!

Ambrosia acted in the movies, and she made so much money that the men who loved her disliked thinking about it. It made her unpleasantly independent of them. She lived in a studio, for who did not? It was an ugly place, and cost a rent that was grotesque, but she spread her personality—that is to say, the personality of Ambrosia—over the place till one never thought of what sort of place it was at all. It was noiseless in rugs and cushions, there was a legion of deep easy chairs, and upon the tables and desk and the wide shelf over the brick fireplace ran another legion or two of photographs, mostly signed at a slant. Bookshelves, bursting with novels and plays, covered the walls. Sally peeped out of the books here and there, but nobody but Ambrosia saw her. There were always flowers everywhere, and oftener than not the vases that held them were more expensive than beautiful.

It was daytime, and Ambrosia sat lost in the depths of a great chair, swathed about with chiffons and a cap of shell-color and lace on her pretty head that was a work of art. Her feet, in silk stockings and quilted satin, were poked into a great orange velvet cushion, and upon a small table with two shelves were all sorts of richly decorated dishes and things that had held her breakfast. They were anchored, all these meaningless dishes, by a very businesslike coffee pot, for Ambrosia just about got through with the game on coffee.

Near by, in another deep chair, sat a man, looking oddly uncomfortable in his city clothes. He was good-looking, as the phrase has it. He wasn't very young, and his eyes and forehead had a twitchy way of seeming occupied with things that weren't just there.

He bent over quite suddenly—Sally thought as if, good gracious, he must have got melted in the heat of the fire—and he kissed and kissed her limp hand lying on the arm of her chair. The hand of Ambrosia, not Sally. He wasn't the sort of man who knows a woman named Sally from one end of New York to the other.

"Now—please don't," yawned Ambrosia.

"Why not?" asked the man absently.

"I'm sure I don't know," and for an instant Ambrosia's white teeth gleamed between her rouged lips.

"It is hard for me to let you be, my dear—" and again the fuddled kisses covered her arm and hand.

Ambrosia's eyes considered the back of his neck. He wasn't a fat man, but there were little flat folds, and they were criss-crossed again with all sorts of fine little wrinkles that didn't seem to have any meaning.

She looked into the fire while he went

on kissing her arm, and she remembered at last to speak, "What did you say?"

And all the time the 'phone kept jingle-jangling. Ambrosia's maid, Thèrese, answered, her broken English beating back whatever happened.

"*Non,* Mademoiselle ees not heere to speek wis Monsieur. *Si, si. Je vais le dirai. Si, Monsieur.*"

Ambrosia paid not the slightest attention to either Thèrese or the 'phone.

After quite a while she brought her eyes to the back of the man's neck again, and she laughed in a way that made him sit up, comically injured.

"The more a man knows you—" he began.

Her dark grey eyes shone, then she narrowed them and really thought about him.

"What on earth does a man like you know about a person like me? You can't. How could you? You make yourselves so awfully silly, when you talk about knowing us. What do you do it for? As if we'd dream of letting you know us? Why don't you talk about—" she hesitated and registered being quite lost for a moment, then broke into a gay laugh. "Let's not talk at all. Why talk? It's so tiring."

"*Mon pardon,* Mademoiselle, *mais* Monsieur John ees at ze 'phone?"

Ambrosia gave Thèrese a smile and walked to the telephone. It was an ornate little telephone, on an ornate little table, with a chair to match, and Ambrosia in her chiffons and cap perfected it.

"Good morning, John," she sang out gaily.

The man, purple and unsettled, followed in a startled circle, stood close behind her chair, bent over her perfumed hair, straightening his glasses as if he would *see* "John" in the telephone.

Ambrosia could feel his breath around the lace edge of her cap. It did not trouble her. Possibly it was Sally, sitting there in Ambrosia's cap, talking to this person named John.

"Yes? Honestly?" she said in a voice the man behind her chair had never heard before: quite a sweet voice and free of mockery.

"Tomorrow night? Yes. That will be perfectly fine. I won't be alone. Of course not. It's years since I've been alone. I'd be scared to death, alone, John. Umum. . . . But about tomorrow night. Will you please be sure and come? It won't be as tiresome as usual. Quite a number of funny people are coming. I've picked them out. And I do want you to be here, John. Come early and stay late, you know? That is, I s'pose the most of 'em 'll show up 'round eleven." Ambrosia broke into a gay laugh. "No, no, not tomorrow night. This is important! You come, there's a good boy!"

While she had been talking to John, the man had slipped his hands under her arms, and, furious with jealousy, had kissed the back of her neck, her hair, her cap. Ambrosia had taken it all with serenity till the receiver was hung up, then she turned and looked at him with curiosity, out of very wide-open eyes.

"Who were you talking to?" he demanded.

"To *John,*" she said. "Didn't you hear?"

"Who is John?"

"Oh," she laughed, "he is a free lance like me. You never do know who we are. I have really tried to get that through your head, you poor dear. I don't believe that you listen to me when I tell you true stories about things."

The man went jerkily back before the fire, and stood there, the light glowing cynically about his tailored figure, all the fuzzy little edges of his head and neck looking—thought Sally—just like a new little yellow chicken out in the sunlight.

"Oh," she gave in to a laugh and slipped far down in her chair, peering disconcertingly at him, "you *are* so lovely and ugly, you *man!*"

"This affair—tomorrow night?" he asked stiffly.

"Is going to be a be-au-ti-ful party."

Thèrese came in with a great pile of boxes, flowered and striped. Her sharp

dark face gleamed joyously as she put them upon the floor beside Ambrosia's chair. The Thèreses love success, adore their "stars," and profit not a little in their loves.

The man, stung by her laugh, veiled his jealousy in sarcasm and stood over the boxes, peering down through his eyeglasses. He waved Thèrese away and unfastened the silver and gold and violet strings. With the flowers were jewel-boxes, and all sorts of little packages and notes. Ambrosia lay watching the hands of the man as they opened things. She didn't care. They helped her to see—oh, many things! Flowers are one very pretty way to wisdom in a great city's days.

A small grey striped box came to view; it had been quite lost among the gorgeous things. At first the hands of the man passed it over for something larger. Then, Ambrosia saw the shadow of "John" upon his mind, as his hands reached for it again and jerked at the string sharply.

At the same moment the small hand of Ambrosia caught at the box, and quite absurdly, with temper in the air, they both hung to the small grey bobbing thing.

The string snapped and the lid fell off, and a bunch of rich, dark pansies looked out in their comical sweet amazement at the struggling hands. With a movement as quick as a cat, Sally had the pansies in her hands, and the man jerked back with the empty box in his.

"You've certainly got a nerve," she told him.

He looked at her bewildered, not understanding.

"I'm really sorry, Ambrosia. I guess there's something wrong with my head this morning."

The poor man was what is called a gentleman and he often tried himself sorely.

"I guess there is," she glared at him.

Among the pansies was a small envelope. She sat back in her chair, the pansies upon her knees, and with a gleam that dared him to touch them, she registered indolence, and deliberately opened her note.

She played with the envelope for a long-drawn-out moment. It was tiny, but she examined both sides of it minutely, then with a delightful gesture of her round arm tossed it into the fire.

The man rocked back and forth upon his heels. Rage was consuming him. His hand moved forward, stealthily and swiftly, and he snatched the card out of her hand.

"Give me that card at once," said Ambrosia, her small body stiff as an arrow in her soft chiffons, her voice like ice.

"You let me read all the others," his voice nearly whimpered. "Why not this one?"

"Because this one is to *me!* The others are from men like your own dear self, who do not know me. Not the least little bit. How many times have I got to explain a thing to you?"

"This is from—'John'—no doubt?" His teeth showed against his red lip under his blond-grey mustache.

"John seems to have got on your nerves, poor dear." She laughed softly, and he couldn't decide whether she was calling him or John "poor dear."

She rose and stood alluringly in the firelight.

The man came close and closer to her.

She let the malice die out of her eyes, and smiled. It may have been just Ambrosia registering a smile, but it was none the less charming. She let the man take her into his arms and kiss her. Her small hand crept down his sleeve till it found his forgetful hand, and swiftly, catlike again, kissing him, she snatched her note and tossed it into the fire.

He held her tight.

"You little devil, you haven't read it yourself!"

"No?" she mocked him, making herself as thin as paper in his arms. "I know what was in it, don't you worry!"

A long shudder of the misery of jealousy ran over the man and he half let her go. "You aren't kind to me, Am-

brosia. I don't mean to be a cad, but you drive me mad."

"You get just exactly what's coming to you," said Ambrosia. She had a small face, and she knew how to make it look smaller. It was very telling.

His penitent hands stroked her cap, drew it off tenderly, then stroked her hair. It was splendid bright brown hair, and it fell down over her shoulders and his arms.

"I'm a fool, a fool, about you!"

"You certainly are," she breathed softly, her smile—certainly this time, registered.

"I've got to toddle away now, my dear," he sighed, straightening his collar and standing off from her, suddenly the downtown man. "But—can't I do anything for you?"

"No'p, thanks,'" yawned Ambrosia. "Just forget it. I'll tell you when you can. I was paid yesterday—many times more than I've earned—or," she laughed cruelly, "than you ever earned, all in a lump. Do I look at you as if I needed anything done for me?"

She lighted a cigarette and sat on the edge of her chair. charming enough without any registering.

The telephone had gone on jingle-jangling. "Thèrese," said Ambrosia, a droll smile upon her face, "just invite 'em, one and all, to come in tomorrow night. Ten to twelve, tell 'em. I'm going to have a big bowl of punch. Who cares how many come? Not I. Do you care, old dear?" she taunted him.

"I do," he owned, smiling foolishly and lighting a cigarette. "But I know that I am lucky enough to have my hour alone with you in the mornings."

"Lucky? You think yourself lucky? Glad you see it that way. What are hours, anyway?" She laughed at him impishly through the smoke. "I have almost forgotten."

"Why do you get yourself in for these mob parties, my dear?" he asked her, a touch of the proprietor upon him. "It wastes your time, and tires you—"

"Why?" Ambrosia bent to the fire, her pansies lovely and rich at the breast of her soft shell-colored dress, the light glowing over her and her hair. "Why? Because, O graven image of unwisdom, if I am thoroughly wasting my time, really boring myself to death, I don't think or feel at all. While I am awake, at least, I sleep. You see?"

II

A GREAT table had been dragged to the center of the studio, candles had been lighted till the big room was sprayed with a blinding, baffling fog of light, dimming faces and melting their owners into mere warm blobs of color. Ambrosia was not there, but Thèrese, curiously haggard and jerky of movement, had brought in the punch and arranged the glasses. It made a gorgeous spot—the big bowl, the glasses of iridescent amber, and the rich, deep, fruity red of the punch.

Every one in the room watched Thèrese, as if she must know something they wanted to know. The room was full of men, sunk in the armchairs, or standing about, staring uneasily at one another, at Thèrese, at the blazing fire. Ambrosia had a habit of collecting all sorts of freaky clocks, and just now their tick-ticking irritated everybody.

"Thèrese?" The Man's voice quavered. "You aren't lyin' to us? You really don' know where Ambrosia is?"

He staggered over to the table, and leaning heavily upon its edge leered imploringly into her eyes.

"I know nozing, Monsieur."

Thèrese's expressive hands cut the air with a gesture that laid any doubt of her truth-telling.

"Zis morning Mademoiselle rang ver' early. She ask for a short-skirt, you call et? She dress like zat, for walk, an' she put on a big coat. An' she say to me—'Thèrese, I go out for ze whole day. Do not worry. Tonight I come. Make ze punch an' let ces Monsieurs drink.' I am so worrey—! Zat is all, *absoluement* all, zat I know!"

A young man in a homespun jacket, a lowish soft collar, his hair brushed off a curiously gay wide-eyed-looking face, and not at all drunk, stood by The

Man's side and peered at Thèrese, as if he'd skin her very mind alive.

"*Mais,* Monsieur John, eet ees ze *verité.* Oh, *je suis tourmentée—*"

The bell rang again and Thèrese hurried to open the door. Every pair of eyes in the room turned to see who'd come. Two women, indeterminate of age and of one sort of Carmen trend or another, came in. They were in eveniug things, extravagant but worn and draggled at the edges.

They came to the center of the room, giving their hands here and there to the men they knew.

"What on earth, Thèrese? Is there really no word of Ambrosia yet?"

One of them, a little older than the other, let her wrap fall off rather prettily. She had a very good back.

"Nozing, Madame. *Je suis desolée!* Et ees so late!"

"I feel quite creepy," said the younger woman. "Has she seemed worried —or unhappy?"

Thèrese tossed her head. "Mademoiselle ees ver' happy. I fear ze accident—"

"I think," said a very large man, getting out of his chair, his light waistcoat and trousers all hitched up, his light socks showing oddly slight ankles, and the nervousness of the rich man who has been "played" many times too often upon him, "that we should all stay, or all go."

The young man in homespun jacket wheeled about and looked up into the face of the fat rich man. Then, even to his own surprise, he broke into an alarming, shattering, genuine laugh.

The Man turned his head slowly and looked at John. So did every face in the light-misted studio.

John gave an echo of his laugh, then pulled himself together.

The Man rose painfully, reeled over to John, and took his two lapels in his two shaking hands.

"You know, J-John," he said thickly, "if it's a joke, an' you'll tell me where li'le Ambrosie's hid-in', I—I'll be sho gla'—I'll f'rgive you for bein' named John. Where's my li'le Ambrosie—John?"

A laugh like a gust of April broke from the doorway—as if a ring-master had lashed his whip—for sometimes a woman's laugh will do that—and they all turned. And there was Ambrosia, her great coat high about her ears, a small, close hat cutting slantwise across her brow with its rich black edge. She lifted her arm and peered under her cuff at her wrist-watch.

"I am just on the tick. I always am, am I not?" and she laughed right into the eyes of a small man who had rushed to meet her, his face purple with rage.

"A devil of a scare you have given us," he said. "Where've you been? You have had us hung up all day at the studio for this damn whim of yours. Where've you been?"

"Don't you wish you knew?" murmured Ambrosia absently, her eyes on John's eyes—John, the free-lance, whom nobody knew, whose other name didn't seem to matter any more than did her real name.

Slowly then the gaiety slipped from her face and gave way to disgust, for The Man had collapsed into his chair, his head upon his pleated shirt-front, his hands trailing upon the rug, and the tears rolling down his face. She crossed the studio slowly, till she stood before him, the others instinctively grouping. She stood before him, studying him. Mechanically she let Thèrese have her coat, and patted her hand to reward her for her overflow of joy. She stood there in the curious flushed room full of feverish souls. She had on a soft blouse and a short-skirt, and her high brown boots were stained with mud. She never looked more youthful, more lovely, with all her mop of hair tucked up under the edges of her small, tilted hat.

The movies producer who had spoken before edged in close again to have it out with Ambrosia. Contracts are contracts. No high-handedness in his movie studios, not much!

"Now what have you been up to?" he insisted. "You know, you can't get

any of this freak stuff over with me. I'm a great deal older than I look. Business is business, when I'm around."

"Then why don't you go away?" said Ambrosia.

"Pardon, Monsieur," said Thèrese, passing him indignantly with Ambrosia's coat in her arms.

"Don't you go monsiring me, you hussy. Mister's good enough in little old New York. Now Ambrosia—"

Ambrosia walked past him as if he were so much thin air.

"Nobody's to bul—bully—my li'le Ambrosi'—" muttered The Man.

Ambrosia stood still and looked at him, crumpled there in his chair; looked as if she heard something more than his words. Then she laughed and went on to the table.

She got herself a glass, ignoring the many sorts of hands that came forth from the shadows to serve her, filled it, turned her back to the bowl and drank it slowly, every drop of it, facing them.

"One does get so awfully thirsty, poking around a whole day in the country." Ambrosia looked about gravely, as if she were imparting knowledge. She looked at John, just as gravely. Two or three purple pansies hung wilted in the front of her blouse. John looked at the pansies. Her hand lifted and touched them, and she smiled. Then she folded her arms, the pansies close to her breast, and she looked at The Man again, crumpled there, drunk and weeping, in her armchair. The color of hot anger rose slowly over her throat and up to the black edge of her hat. Then it sank again, and with a carefully registered smile of self-possession, she looked about the room. The moving-picture producer, the victim of stars, stood, his mouth hanging open, subdued.

"Poor old dear!" she laughed over him. "Brace yourself for a shock, dear man. I've *quit!*"

"You've *what?*" he shrieked.

"Q-u-i-t," she spelled it for him, patiently. "I have a lot of money in the bank now, and I am going to have a funeral for Ambrosia, and take Sally Thomas, the real me, back to the country to live."

She looked again at The Man, drunk and maudlin.

"I've got enough," she shuddered, a shudder that required no registering to "get over." "I've got enough of a good many things besides money. I should worry!"

"You'll find out!" raged the producer.

"The things I find out!" she mocked him. "I can hardly stand it. Go ahead, I'll pay the damages. I shall just love getting you paid off." Sally looked out of the eyes of Ambrosia.

"You ver' bad li'le girl, Ambrosie," babbled The Man in the armchair. "Where you been hidin'—? I've b'n sho worri'—"

Ambrosia did not turn her head to look at him. Sally did not like him, and Sally had come back. Then she spoke slowly, with her eyes upon the two women, and all the temper and gustiness gone from her.

"I've been out in the country all day long. I just went to the station and took a train and got off when I liked what I saw outside. I've been out of doors all day long, alone. I got so hungry—! It was wonderful, really wanting something to eat after all these years of being stuffed. I got my supper in the station, and I had a talk with the waitress. A nice girl, from up state, too. It was simply heavenly, being loose in the country. I just snooped around, and played at being lost and found. I got my feet just soaked. It was—muddy!"

"Li'le peach!" whispered The Man, his face as blank as the face of an imbecile.

She listened to him, but she did not look at him. Then she looked at John. They were serious for a moment, and then they smiled as if there was no one else there at all. It surely was Sally who smiled, but sweeter than she'd ever have been if she'd stayed "up state." The small black hat would never have crossed her forehead in that way nor held her hair that way under its de-

lightfully frivolous little brim if she hadn't been Ambrosia too. A clever painter doesn't leave things out because he doesn't know how to paint them. Sally had learned to be clever, and now she was ready to begin the leaving out.

She turned back to the punch bowl, the light of the candles upon the table catching under her eyes, the tip of her nose, her chin. She began filling the glasses. Hands reached for them, the tension breaking into talk and laughter. Ambrosia had been on a lark, that was all. She'd been grim for a moment, but now she had come back to them. The face of the producer melted into a forgiving and appreciative grin. His hand touched hers, resting a moment, as he took the glass she offered him. There was something strange, all the same, in the flash of a glance that she gave him.

The Man in the armchair had got past moving. His hand lifted and pleaded for a glass.

The fat rich fellow, the circlet of rubies upon his pudgy hand glittering in the candlelight, good-humoredly filled a glass for him. Sally took the glass from him, and gave him a glance and sent him into a shadow to think again upon the risks the rich and desirable take—perhaps foolishly—

"To Ambrosia!" said the woman who had dropped her coat off her good-looking shoulders.

"Who's Ambrosia?" demanded Sally, holding her full glass to the light and watching the color.

"To Sally, then," said the voice of a nondescript man. "It's a jolly name."

"Who cares for a name?" said another. "To *You!*"

"Sally cares," she laughed; and when they'd toasted her she lifted her glass and drank alone, a silent toast, and very well, or not at all, "registered."

A silence fell upon the big room, a queer, long silence.

"An angel passing over," said Sally softly, her small hand lifted as if she were listening.

And then a dreadful thing happened. The Man had gone to sleep and his heavy breathing rose and fell in insistent rhythm.

Slowly Sally's color rose again. In a tempest of fury she took the punch bowl in her two strong hands. In a moment she stood over him, the bowl lifted above him, drunk in her arm-chair. And then, with a mirthless, horrified sound of laughter from every throat in the room, she tipped the bowl and laughed, as they had laughed, when the first red drops fell and trickled over his head. And then, in a flash, she emptied the whole thing over him, drenching him redder than in blood.

The Man gasped and beat at the air. He got to his feet, tottered, and fell in a heap upon the rug.

Sally stood off, looking at him, then went to the hearth with the bowl and dropped it and broke it into a dozen pieces. She picked up the pieces one at a time and broke them again and again, making an orgy of it all to herself.

"*Now!*" She turned at last and faced them. "*Clear out of here, every blessed one of you!* And if he—" she paused and looked with disgust upon the heap of flesh on her rug, trying to get to his feet, trying to mop the frightening red stuff from his face, terrified, crying—"if he has a friend among you, take him to the bathroom, wash him, then take him away with you! *But*—" she lifted her head and looked about, "*be quick about it!*"

John, without a glance of by-your-leave, sat on the edge of the table. The fat rich man had already gone. The moving-picture producer came to the rescue of the heap of flesh lying on the rug.

John and Sally didn't look at one another. They waited, very patiently, till the room was cleared, till the door had closed upon the last of the lot, and till Thèrese, the wise, had shut herself away somewhere beyond a door.

Then, very quietly, her hat in her hand, her eyes in John's eyes, Sally said,

"It's funny how awfully darn lonesome you can be living in a crowd—"

KNEE PLUS ULTRA

By John E. Rosser

SATURDAY evening dinner had just been served at the Hendersonville Country Club, and there was the lull which precedes the dancing. A group gathered about the reading-room center table, and someone mentioned the name of Mrs. Gordon Stuyvesant Schuyler, of New York. Instantly the conversation of the group became animated.

For good reason, Hendersonville was proud of the achievements of Mrs. Schuyler, for within it she had been born and had grown to young womanhood. Fifteen years ago she had gone to New York as the wife of that wealthy patrician, Gordon Stuyvesant Schuyler. From the metropolitan press Hendersonville received echoes of Mrs. Schuyler's social triumphs; it knew that its daughter had won rare recognition of her own right. Philanthropy, literature, art, the newer civic life—all these had been blessed by Mrs. Schuyler's gracious and competent touch.

"She was very gifted in art, even as a child," observed Mrs. Thomas, whose hair was becomingly silvered. "I recall how she used to admire paintings, and always she selected the works of the masters."

"Her taste in letters was equally marked," added Professor Andrews, of the choir of English in Hendersonville College for Women. "She interpreted Tennyson and even Browning with superlative acuteness. It is scant wonder that authors of note should find in her a congenial and inspiriting companion."

A lively group of younger men came in from the billiard room.

"She was probably the most popular girl in her social set," someone said.

"She was blessed of the Lord with a nature as refreshing as the mountain breezes, a heart as transparently pure as some rock-nestled tarn; her every impulse toward goodness, her every thought free of guile." Thus the Reverend Josiah Greensby, pastor of St. John's Episcopal.

And so the comment went, local pride in Mrs. Schuyler's gifts and triumphs finding many to give panegyric voice. Yet there was one of the group who sat silent, meditative. In the lapel of his smartly tailored coat was a gardenia; his keen, gray eyes seemed to belie the quizzical wrinkles which had come in his cheeks with the years. At last he spoke.

"She had the most beautiful legs of any girl who ever grew up in Hendersonville," he murmured fervently.

And there was silence, as when the ultimate has been set forth.

TOO MUCH PARNASSUS

By L. M. Hussey

I

MARK FLEMMING, a little flushed in the face, closed the door of his apartment behind him with a singular tingling in the fingers of the hand which still clung to the knob.

She had smiled at him again!

This was the third time; three times since the beginning of the week. It was now evident that she anticipated his hour for return in the evening, and waited for him, standing in the half opened door of her own apartment, to smile as he passed through the corridor.

Mark turned on the lights almost furtively and knew as he did so the absurdity of his cat-like manoeuvers. His wife was miles away and even had she been at that moment in their suite, her vision could not have penetrated through a solid wooden door to observe the smiling woman in the hall. Nevertheless, the habit of being long married and ever virtuous weighed upon Mark subconsciously and now when another woman had looked upon him with seductive lips his sense of having somehow compromised his faithfulness displayed itself.

Mark had so outgrown the habit, in the eleven years of being married, of considering any other woman than his wife, that the present attention of this one with the smile disconcerted him and produced even a faint sense of fear.

At the same time, he was piqued, he was interested. His wife, visiting her relatives in the South, had been absent now for nearly a month. Mark was getting a little lonely. No doubt that, in a small measure, accounted for his interest.

He got up finally and walked softly to the kitchenette. His efforts at cooking were an absurd business and unnecessary, but they illustrated the extraordinarily domestic animal eleven years of marriage had made out of Mark Flemming. He could not fry a piece of bacon without burning it, nor turn out a boiled potato with a soft center, but he preferred these indigestibles of his own to the unused gregariousness of eating in a public restaurant.

Tonight Mark made something less of a success than usual. His mental processes had somehow slid into a single groove, his mind refused to think of anything but the woman in the hall.

At that moment, she was a curious and tempting creature. In the glimpse Mark had caught of her he sensed something unusual, a fervour in her face, perhaps, a significant disorder of her black hair, a languorous droop in her shoulders. She was very unlike his wife. Helen was obvious, she was a little plump, she enjoyed moving pictures, she cooked well, she liked a good magazine story with a pleasant ending. There was nothing smoldering, mysterious and hidden in Helen. . . .

But this one . . . Mark felt assured of her difference and felt, too, that it would be an adventure to know her.

Presently he endeavoured to read her, but his unusual thoughts would not leave him. He got up and circled the room, three or four times. That activity effected no calm. He then drummed upon

the piano for a few moments, finally to spring up, seize his hat, and walk out of the apartment.

Outside his door his movements became less energetic. He assumed his usual demeanour—the deportment of a married man with a wife to whom he has been faithful for eleven years—but under that exterior assumption of the ordinary, his thoughts remained errant.

In a few moments he would pass her door. . . . What if he stopped and knocked? She would be a startling woman to know—he had perceived that much in her face.

He walked by without knocking. . . .

He continued down the corridor and rang for the lift. It came, he went down, and out to the street.

He had no objective. He did not understand the curious sensations that flushed his mind. He mingled with the crowd, walking aimlessly, as if pushed by a wind of unknown purposes.

He covered perhaps two or three blocks in this way, when he was aroused by a fragrance, a perfume that blew across his nostrils like the smell of a field of flowers.

He looked up. A woman had passed him and was now walking a few paces in front. It was not *the* woman—she was taller and moulded less fetchingly—but Flemming experienced a tingling of his sensations like the touch of a warm room after the cold. He could not see the face of this girl in front of him, but he was somehow conscious of a great desire to talk with her.

For a second, perceiving his condition with a moment of detachment, he frowned. Something, some combination of circumstances, and it couldn't be entirely the smiles of that woman in the corridor, had awakened him to allure. He was full of old sentimental desires and vague longings that he had not felt for years; eleven years, anyway.

The girl who had passed was drawing away, and following an impulse that dissolved his frown, he quickened his steps to keep up with her.

She stopped, suddenly, to look into a lighted shop window, and Flemming caught for a few seconds a pleasant and provocative profile, cut almost like a cameo against the glare of the lights.

He himself paused. Now, he reasoned, was an opportune moment to step beside her and speak to her; she could do nothing more than refuse to talk to him.

But Flemming had been married eleven years, eleven years out of practice, and he was timid, like a man who comes out of prison into a changed world.

The girl was walking on again, and like a shadow, he once more followed her. This could not go on forever. He wanted to speak, and he would have to do so soon. He decided he would give himself one more block and then he would step close to her and take her arm.

But before the block was covered, a man, approaching, lifted his hat to the girl and the two paused together.

"Well!" Flemming heard her exclaim, "I didn't expect to see you."

"You've had dinner?" he heard the other ask.

"No, I was just now going for a bite."

"I'll have the honour then. . . ."

Flemming turned and retraced his steps, genuinely disappointed. Had he been less procrastinating he might have found himself opposite her at table by this time.

He was walking back over the same ground and when he was once more outside his apartment building, he stopped, staring at the street, irresolute and undetermined. Something, he knew, was lacking, something he desired; he was vaguely troubled, like one in a dream.

But there was no use standing about insanely in front of the house, nor any more use in tramping the streets. He went inside and was carried up to his floor. Once more he approached the door from which the black-haired

woman had smiled for three successive nights.

He stopped. It was closed. He knew nothing, particularly, about her—she had only come recently to the apartment—since his wife had gone away, in fact. He knew that she lived alone, attended only by a maid, and he had discovered by inquiry that her name was Miss Doris Kennedy. . . . Staring at the door, he stepped toward it. An adventure might lie behind. . . .

He lifted the knocker and let it fall. . . .

He waited; there was presently a movement inside and the door opened. It was the maid who had answered his summons.

"Is Miss Kennedy at home?" he asked.

"No, sir, she isn't. May I tell her who called?"

"Never mind," said Flemming; "I'll stop by again."

He continued to his own door and went in and to bed. For a while he had difficulty in finding sleep, for he was used to a cup of cocoa before retiring and his wife was not there to brew it for him.

II

MARK FLEMMING did very little work the day that followed. An excitement, like the fluid of some ancient elixir, was in his veins and he was quite determined that he should have some sort of an adventure.

Thinking over his life for many years past, he was amazed at its humdrum and unemotional aspect. He and Helen had been living in an hideously banal groove . . . moving pictures, phonograph records, player-piano rolls. . . . There was no poetry in that, and life, after all, concealed many dark, swift channels of strange allure. He felt that he had too long satisfied himself with common pursuits and obvious things.

He went home somewhat early and when he reached the house he determined that this evening she could receive a smile in return.

But he was disappointed; the woman was not at her door and it was closed and curiously bare.

He walked past—and then turned back. He stepped up and knocked.

Once more the maid answered his summons.

"Will you step inside?" she asked. "I'll see if Miss Kennedy can see you."

He seated himself in a chair in the little reception hall. He could hear movements in another room and presently someone approaching.

In a second the woman herself came into the room and he stood up.

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "And I had thought you were quite imperturbable. I had given you up."

She held out her hand to him and they introduced themselves.

"Then they were meant for me?" Flemming asked.

"Of course. I'm not a Cheshire cat. I smile for a purpose."

"But don't you see," Flemming explained, "I couldn't understand. I wasn't at all imperturbable, but I was unable to see just why *I* was favoured—I'm not used to it."

"You've a pretty modesty," she said, laughing. "And do you know what attracted me and made me so very unconventional?"

"That's what I can't imagine at all."

"An eager look in your face, as you walked through the corridor. A wishing, poetic kind of look—I knew you were different. I hate humdrum people!"

"An eager look? Poetic? Well, eager, perhaps—I was probably thinking of dinner. . . ."

Doris grimaced, as if something bitter were on her tongue, and shook her head.

"Don't say that," she admonished. "That spoils things."

In a moment of pause, Flemming looked at her. The girl was slender, her hair was blacker than he had imagined, her face had distinctly that expectancy, the suggestion of a fervour, which he had felt to be there in his previous glimpses of her. Her move-

ments, her gestures, had not just the suavity to be called gracile, for their quality was a nervous and somewhat feline restlessness, but by no means unpleasant. She was, most obviously, utterly unlike his wife Helen, and it had been so long since he had considered a woman from the standpoint of an opposite in the duel of sex, that she was in most respects unfathomable to him.

"I wanted to stop," he said to her, "and ask you to have dinner with me this evening."

"Better than that," she suggested, "you stay with me. Everything is nearly prepared; there's no use going out now. Will you do that?"

Of course Flemming assented. They presently went into her dining room, where the maid served them with a pleasing little series of courses. Afterward, Doris led him to a larger room containing a piano.

"You play?" she asked.

"Only when there is nothing else for me to do but press a speed control and let a perforated roll do the rest."

"You've not developed your genius. A man of your sort was made for these artistic things."

"And why do you think that?"

"I read faces. In yours I see the soul of an artist."

Flemming, who earned his living purchasing oils and greases for a large corporation, was flattered. No one had ever read his face in that fashion before. It was pleasant to be told that his was the soul of an artist, that his face held a poetic look, that he was not, from his appearance, an ordinary person, that he had a genius undeveloped.

Doris was herself sitting before the piano with her head thrown back a little. She began to play, curious music, not much tune to it, Flemming thought, and very melancholy. She continued for some time, and then stopped abruptly.

"You know that?" she asked.

"I'm afraid not," Flemming answered.

"Pelleas and Melisande—not Debussy, but Schoenberg's tone-poem."

"I'm afraid I'm very ignorant," said Flemming. "It has a doleful sound, hasn't it?"

"Yes, I like that. I don't fancy everything always sugar-sweet, do you?"

She turned to him with her eyes drooping, looking on his face as if in study. He met her gaze, stirred now by the curious and vague desires, like wishes out of dreams, that had come to him on the street the night before. He seemed to find nothing to say to her and she did not take her languorous eyes from his face.

A full moment, perhaps, passed over before he sprang up, bent over her and kissed her. . . .

"You are a poet," she murmured.

"And you're a little princess," said Flemming.

"I know that you can make love to me like a poet," she went on. She flung out her arms:

"Oh! I'm tired of ordinary things; I'm sick of ordinary people!"

She put her hands up, burying them in his hair, pulled down his head to her face, and kissed him.

"Sit here beside me," she said, "and talk to me."

Fleming did as she wished with an intoxication at her nearness. This was all an extraordinary adventure to him, although he confessed secretly to a little uneasiness. She was setting him a difficult rôle, for he had not a great confidence in his poetic faculty. He would hate to prove himself ordinary, now that she had so fervently assured him of his distinction. Because of this slight distraction, he was a trifle silent.

"What are you thinking of?" she asked. "Tell me your thoughts."

"What could I be thinking of?"

"You mean that you are thinking of me? And what?"

"I was thinking that—that you are beautiful—"

It seemed a little lame to him, and not just what might be expected from one of his estate.

"If you love me, I am beautiful; you understand that, don't you, poet? For you, I need not be really beautiful; your imagination will make me so. Isn't that your art?"

"Yes," said Flemming; and to cover up his rather vague understanding of her argument, he kissed her again.

It was pleasant—and a little devilish, considering Helen and the eleven years' rectitude—to kiss her; she used a delicate perfume and this was agreeable to Flemming as he bent close to her; her lips were appealingly soft. But as things were, it was a little difficult to talk to her—the poet complex. She was excessively romantic, but then, not altogether a fool, and the genius which she had recognized in him must certainly be there, but he was convinced it was much too undeveloped for present exhibition.

"What do you suppose will come out of this?" she asked, looking into his face. "This—between you and me?"

"Ah—" breathed Flemming, temporizing.

"A beautiful thing!" she exclaimed, with fervour. "I can see days of loveliness. We will forget everything sordid, everything common and ordinary. That is something possible to us. Why is it we have not found each other before?"

"I don't know, sweetheart," said Flemming.

Again, to avoid the uneasy complications of the conversation, he put his arms about her tenderly, and drew her close to him. She yielded with a languorous ecstasy; he felt her breath go out softly and touched his lips again to hers. It was a long and clinging kiss, very pleasant to Flemming, who had sudden memories of his early youth and little girls he had met in the park and kissed just this way.

He was rather lost in these sentimental recollections when he felt her arms pushing against him. He drew away and Doris arose, her eyes half closed, her hands thrust out in a gesture of appeal.

"Go now!" she said. "Leave me to my dreams. It is enough this time. Come to me tomorrow, my poet!"

Somewhat surprised, but after all a little relieved, Flemming found his hat and coat and went out the door, turning, a moment later, into his own apartment.

It was dark as usual. He went to his bedroom and turned on the lights. He walked to the bureau and stared into the glass.

Flemming's face was not unpleasant—a good face for a purchasing agent.

"Poet—" he murmured, dubiously. "But—she's some little chicken—"

And after a moment:

"Still, I probably am. She says so."

He went to bed and again missed his cup of cocoa.

III

FLEMMING was very busy the next day and had little opportunity to dream or think of Doris. When he walked out in the evening, he felt weary and looked forward, shrinkingly, to the prospect of either eating in a restaurant or trying to concoct a meal for himself.

Then he thought of Doris. He was expected there. He caught a sudden picture of her with her dusky hair and dreaming eyes and red, pleasant lips.

And once more he remembered that he was a poet.

That was too bad. It rather made the prospect of another evening formidable. He had got through, somehow, the night before, but he would certainly demonstrate his lyric ineptness on the second meeting.

He scowled mentally. Perhaps he was too old—he had gone along too easily. To carry these things through as expected, required a certain fire that he seemed to find difficult—

He was already at the house and turning now the key in the lock of his door. He pushed it open, and was surprised to see the rooms lighted.

He stood a moment in wonder—and Helen came running out to him!

"Why, hello!" he exclaimed. "When

did you get back? And why didn't you write or wire or something? I would have met you."

She put her arms around him and kissed him soundly.

"Get washed up," she said. "Dinner will be ready in a few minutes."

"Dinner! Gad, I've been having a time with that!"

"Certainly you have, you poor, helpless person. You're nothing but a big, no-account business man—Now hustle along. I haven't seen a good picture in an age. We'll have to go tonight."

"Surely," said Flemming. "But I must run out a second. I'll be right back. There's a letter I forgot to drop."

He slipped out of the door and went below to the telephone booths. He called Doris' number. After a second he recognized her voice.

"Poet—" he heard her murmur.

A vast sensation of relief came to Flemming. Helen was back. She had been away too long; a fact that accounted for his entire trouble. And now he was no longer under the necessity of developing his genius—

"Say, Miss Kennedy," he said, "I'm sorry I can't see you tonight. The wife is back, and we're going out to take in a movie—"

PECCABO

By John E. Rosser

AT the rail of the choir-loft she stood, her lips apart, with the poignantly beautiful cry of the soul, questing for the Infinite. Like a mute benison her gaze swept the solemn-faced worshipers below, until her eyes rested, as if upon that which had been sought, where sat a man whose vision remained fixed upon her who sang . . . in his look an inquiry not to be discerned in any of the rest. The singer pressed her right hand to her breast, as if in a religious ecstasy, and the face of him upon whom she looked directly shone with beatific gladness—

For that was the signal agreed upon, that she would be alone that evening and that she would meet him at the Biltmore at eight o'clock.

EPIGRAM: A statement of something everybody wants to forget in such a way that no one can help remembering it.

A CLEVER woman: One who can make her last kiss seem as innocent as her first should have been.

BEFORE marriage—bushels of kisses. After marriage—pecks.

A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

By Van Vechten Hostetter

EUGENE WHARTON was the one thing Evelyn Macey had wanted and not had. By hook or crook—by smiles or tears—Evelyn had always been able to obtain her heart's desires. As a school girl she had had more candy and ice cream than her father's liberal allowance would buy. She had lacked cash, but she had never lacked in her blue eyes the shy, half-confessing admiration that stirred the hearts of white-coated and cocked-capped soda dispensers to hope nor the forlorn wistfulness that melted the hearts of cashiers when she asked to have charged little checks that would never be paid.

In her débutante days she had acquired desires and tastes that were quite beyond her father's power to gratify, but there had always been fond and susceptible uncles and aunts and old friends of the family. With them the methods of her young girlhood were effective. For the little maiden with an inadequate allowance the confectioner's shop is an important part of the kindergarten of life. There, under the urge of necessity and keen desire, she seeks and finds and learns to practice the tricks of a lady's trade. So Evelyn had learned to get what she wanted and had never learned to be afraid of wanting a thing for fear it was beyond her reach. What could not be had here was surely obtainable there and things that could not be won by wit or flattery or show of affection could be won by pouting or drooping or weeping.

But Eugene Wharton had been the only man who had Eugene Wharton's love and good name and money to give and Eugene Wharton had held fast to them all. Kindly, gentle, sympathetic, he had seemed times without number about to yield and Evelyn had hoped high; but he had not yielded and Evelyn had felt a consciousness that all his kindness and gentle sympathy and consideration and respect were but the manners of a gentleman and that what she had thought was almost within her grasp had been as always millions of miles away.

Eugene Wharton's whole nature and apparent attitude toward life had made it peculiarly difficult for Evelyn to realize and to confess at last the hopelessness of her campaign. He was devoted to all the traditions of a line of austere men who demanded of themselves the sternest virtues while they were tolerant of all the weaknesses of their fellows, whose conduct toward the world and particularly toward women was governed by rigid rules, requiring patience, charity and suspension of judgment. He was the very kind of man to be won by a show of weakness and helplessness and need of comfort and protection. Yet he had not been won.

Defeat admitted, Evelyn had passed through a period of bitter despondency, in which she could see nothing good or sweet or worth while in the world, and then through one of patient, noble and self-pitying resignation. Consolation had come with the thought that where she had failed no woman could succeed. More consolation had come with the thought that Eugene Wharton, while a good enough man, was something of a fool and an old fogy after all. Then the world had grown brighter quickly and life sweeter and

Evelyn had caused John Macey to lead her to the altar.

John Macey did not suppose Evelyn had had anything to do with it. Neither did anyone else. Neither did Evelyn, for she was one of those women—or, rather, one of those persons, for there are men like that—who succeed greatly in deceiving others because in the first place they deceive themselves. The ordinary liar, who, knowing his guilt, cannot help revealing it to the argute, is harmless enough; the dangerous one is the one that believes he is telling the anointed truth. Evelyn with her delicate round face—almost like a child's—soft lips that trembled sometimes—eyes with faith and a little wonder in them—pale gold hair parted simply in the middle and combed down always over the ears—Evelyn looked guileless enough and believed she was.

Guileless or not, Evelyn was a good wife to John Macey. She saw to it that his house was well kept. She held her social position decently and serenely. She did nothing that would make men pity John Macey or laugh at him. She loved him and if she had not her egotism and her love of an unusually good woman's reputation and distinction would have kept her what she was.

John Macey was a good husband, too. He was a sober-minded man, who loved his wife more than anything else in the world except his books. Sometimes he was uncompanionable and sometimes even impatient when Evelyn wanted to talk and he was deep in study of some complex subject such as he loved and she could not understand. And he had never quite put off a certain reserve that Evelyn would have loved to have him put off and had supposed he would. It was not enough to make her afraid of him, but she had a consciousness that if anything untoward should ever rise up between them she would be afraid. So she was glad there could be nothing. She was quite happy and so was he.

One night John Macey came home with gossip from the club, something he seldom brought.

"I hear an old admirer of yours is going to marry," he said at dinner, smiling mischievously and a little triumphantly, as though the news signified a personal victory for him.

"Who?" asked Evelyn, curious and eager.

"Eugene Wharton."

"Eugene Wharton," Evelyn almost gasped. "Eugene Wharton! I don't believe it. Who's he going to marry?"

"Harriet Andrews."

Evelyn laughed.

"John, it isn't so," she said. "I didn't think Eugene would ever marry, but I *know* he'd never marry Harriet. It's just impossible."

"It comes pretty straight," her husband said. "It's all over town. I wonder the papers haven't got onto it. Wharton's been telling it himself to his friends. Why don't you believe it?"

"Why, it's just too absurd," said Evelyn authoritatively. "I know Eugene well enough to know that. He's too old-fashioned and old-mannish for Harriet. He and I found out we could never get along together and the Lord knows if we couldn't they couldn't. I don't think I'm so frivolous and light-headed and I wasn't then, but he thought I was and if I was frivolous then Harriet Andrews is a regular devil."

"She's all right, isn't she?" John Macey looked at his wife curiously.

"Why, of course," said Evelyn and added, "so far as I know. You know her as well as I do. We were in school a while together; that's years ago. Harriet likes a good time, like any girl. She gets a little loud and careless once in a while. That's just her way, she was always that way. That doesn't mean anything to an ordinary person, but it does to Eugene. No, somebody's got it wrong. You just see."

"Well," said Macey, "I don't know. Maybe you're right. Doctor Richard Cary Grimm was one that told me and he said Wharton told him; but I don't know."

"I don't either," said Evelyn. "I'll wait a while before I believe it."

II

THAT night at the opera they saw Eugene Wharton and Harriet Andrews together. Wharton was nervously attentive. Harriet was simply gowned, for her, and her demeanor was oddly sedate.

"There they are," Macey said to his wife. "What did I tell you?"

Evelyn scoffed.

"I have heard the same opera with him," she said. "I didn't marry him, though."

"All right," said Macey.

"You see she has no ring."

"No, she hasn't; that's right."

On the way home Macey was silent and Evelyn was glad he was. She was not happy. She did not yet believe Eugene Wharton and Harriet Andrews were engaged, but she was afraid they were. She had been certain Wharton would never marry, but she had not dreamed she would care if he did. She told herself now she would not care and the possibility or probability of this marriage had nothing to do with her depression. And she believed it. Yet she was depressed. Perhaps it was something she had eaten, perhaps it was just a mood for which there was no reason. She was not ill. There was nothing really wrong with her. Yet she suffered with a vague uneasiness, a sense of illness without actual illness, unhappiness with nothing to make her unhappy, discontent with nothing to be discontented with.

For hours Evelyn could not sleep. She lay and watched the shadows that the street lamp cast into her room and tried to think of other things than the possible marriage of Eugene Wharton, but she could think of nothing else. She got up and lit a cigarette. It was an ungentlewomanly thing to do, she thought; she didn't often smoke. Tonight it might bring relief. There was some excuse, some reason. She would have thought very little of herself if she had smoked habitually and drank—as Harriet Andrews did. She was not of that sort. She threw away her cigarette. It sickened her. It was disgusting. A woman's smoking seemed particularly detestable to her tonight. One might expect almost anything from cigarette-puffing women. She was not one of them. And Eugene Wharton was going to marry Harriet Andrews. It was really too bad. Eugene *was* good. Still, it was what she might have expected, he was such a fool. But he *was* good. Perhaps, after all, it wasn't true. She had no ring. Still, there could be explanations enough of that. Many such things cause much speculation and wonder just because people do not care about telling what is their own business to the whole world.

Evelyn went to sleep telling herself that she did not care anything about Eugene Wharton and his marriage. She awoke weary. The face in her mirror sent a shiver through her. It was old. It looked as if she might have been up all night drinking and dancing as she had known some women and even girls to do, Harriet Andrews among them, Harriet Andrews, the girl that was to marry Eugene Wharton.

Why did she think always of Harriet Andrews? She asked herself if there was left in her heart when she ceased to love him a certain tenderness for Eugene, a sort of maternal concern for him. Perhaps so; she was the kind of woman for that.

Evelyn had breakfast in her room. She was not ill, yet she felt weak and worn. For the first time she shrank from meeting her husband. All morning she sat with a book in her hand, looking at its pages and reading none of them. She wanted to see Eugene. Why, she did not know. Whether it was right to want to see him she did not know. She could not see wherein it was wrong and yet somewhere in her heart was a feeling of self reproach. Perhaps she should see him—perhaps it was even her duty. She was a little startled as the thought occurred that she did not even know where he lived. Surely her heart had given little con-

cern to him since her marriage. Yet now she could think only of him.

The maid asked about lunch. No, Evelyn wanted none. She was not well. She would lie down again. Ten minutes later she rang for the maid.

"I think I'll dress," she said. "I think I'll go to the matinée."

III

WHEN her chauffeur had left the theater, Evelyn found Eugene's address in a telephone directory and drove in a taxicab to his apartment. On the way she dared to look into her mirror. She was beautiful again. The worn look was gone from her face, only her eyes were soft and wistful, just as she wanted them to be—though she was not conscious of any desire to have them so.

Eugene was big and awkward, square-faced and dark. He seemed more awkward and confused now than she had ever seen him before. His face was red.

"Why—why, Evelyn, this is a—a surprise," he stammered.

Her voice was low and tense as she looked into his eyes. "I wonder if you will forgive me?"

Her manner made him curious and uneasy.

"Forgive you? Why, what for? Oh, excuse me, Evelyn; sit down."

She sank a little helplessly into the chair.

"For what I'm going to do," she sighed.

Eugene smiled a puzzled smile. Evelyn could see he was more affected and alarmed than he cared to show.

"I don't know what you're going to do, Evelyn, but I guess I can forgive you easily enough. I could forgive anything you could do—always—and just now I guess I could forgive anybody anything."

Her eyes fell before his as he stood looking down at her.

"Tell me," she said, "if it's true you are going to marry . . . Harriet Andrews."

"Yes," he said—his voice sounded rich and full with joy—"it's true."

The words seemed to pinch Evelyn's heart. Her lips trembled.

"Do you know I loved you—once?" she asked.

"I think you did me that honor."

"I wonder if you've ever thought that ever since then I've loved you—in another way—and felt near to you."

"I'm afraid I haven't thought much about it," he said, as if half-ashamed, "but I can believe."

"Eugene," she cried, looking up at him suddenly with pained and worried eyes, "I don't want you to make a mistake."

"A mistake?" he questioned, uncomprehending. "A mistake? What do you mean?"

The pain grew deeper in her eyes as she answered. She was suffering.

"Surely you don't know Harriet Andrews. You can't know her. Oh, Eugene, you mustn't throw your big heart away! You are too good for—for *that!*"

His face darkened. Whether it was with anger or fear Evelyn did not know.

She waited, breathless, for him to speak.

From under her lowered eyelids she could see that he was thinking hard, looking down at her and stroking his chin.

Finally he sighed as if over a baffling problem. "I don't know what you mean, Evelyn."

"Oh, Eugene, when everyone else knew, how could it be that *you* couldn't know what Harriet was?"

A faint smile, half understanding, came to his face.

"I think I see," he said, sadly, reproachfully. "I'm slow, you know. I always was. You mean they say Harriet has been too fond of a good time. I've heard that. I understand. I know her. I understand her better, perhaps, than anyone that says—what you say."

"Oh," Evelyn cried hoarsely, as if her soul were on the rack, "Oh, Eugene, if that were only all! If that were only all!"

"All! All!" he said sharply. "What else is there?"

She caught the note of fear in his voice.

"How can I say it?" she whispered, clasping her hands tragically. Her cheeks burned. Her eyes would not leave the floor. "There—there was a man. I *know*— Oh, it's too horrible! God help me, Eugene, I can't tell!"

His voice came strained and hard. She could not look at him, but she knew with what torturing effort he was holding himself and speaking. "How do you know?"

"I can't tell you."

She looked at him an instant. His face was black and hard.

"Who was the man?" His voice trembled with suppressed emotion, but it was still like steel. "You can tell me that."

"I don't know." Her lips trembled with the words.

It seemed an hour before his answer came, cold through set teeth. "You don't know!"

There was a sarcasm in his tone that cut her to the quick. "Still you knew who the woman was. It seems there's never any doubt about the woman . . . Who was he?"

"Eugene, I don't know; I only know it's true."

Tears came into her eyes and she buried her face in her hands.

"Well," he said at last, coldly, unmoved by her weeping, "I will find out. I'm glad you told me. I will find out. I guess you'd better go home now."

"Eugene," she sobbed softly, "don't hurt her. Don't say anything to her."

His voice was still cold and hard.

"Don't worry about her. I won't tell her—or hurt her. Don't you think you'd better go now, Evelyn?"

She got up weakly, her head bowed, and moved toward the door. He opened it.

"I know you hate me," she said. "I was afraid you would. But I've done my duty."

"No," he said, "I don't hate you." And he closed the door.

IV

Of her visit to Eugene Wharton's apartment Evelyn Macey told her husband nothing. She taxed her strength and her will to the end that he should not know the torture and turmoil in her heart. In the weeks and months that passed she seemed unusually light spirited to him, though the change was not sufficient to claim very serious attention. When he was away she sat in her room and thought and wondered about Eugene or motored or attended the theater and thought always and wondered about Eugene.

Evelyn regarded herself as a martyr. She had sacrificed the good will of a man she had once loved for his own sake and he hated her—hated her as if she had been actuated by the lowest and most selfish motives instead of by the noblest and purest. And yet perhaps, after all, he did not hate her. The engagement had never been announced. She had watched the papers and kept closely enough in touch with her friends to be sure no announcement could be made without her knowledge.

Eugene had said he would find out the name of the man. But he could find nothing out, at least not that. Then a thought, a hope thrilled her. What if he had found out—something? Evelyn had had to confess to herself that she had lied and then she had justified the lie. She knew Harriet Andrews was a bad woman and it had been right to magnify her wickedness for the pure purpose of saving a good man for her. Now Harriet was quite capable of the blackest sin that Evelyn with her conventional virtue could conceive of. It was not improbable that she was guilty of it. It was probable that she was. Eugene had said he would hunt the truth. Evelyn began to believe he had found it.

One night at dinner it occurred to Evelyn that her husband, who had brought the first news of Eugene's engagement, might have heard more gossip.

"You don't seem to have much more to say about the approaching Wharton-Andrews wedding," she remarked banteringly.

He smiled.

"That's a funny thing," he said. "I was going to tell you about that. It's been put off for some reason. Nobody seems to know. I guess there's no trouble, though. They say Wharton's been away a good deal. Probably some business that he doesn't want advertised. I guess there's no doubt about their engagement. Nobody seems to think there is."

Evelyn's heart thrilled. She found it hard to conceal her new hope. She wanted to laugh or cry. But she went on with the meal and sat in the library and read while he read, afraid to go early to her room lest he suspect something—though she had done that often enough before. Whereas before she had lain awake full of fear, this night she lay wide awake and restless with hope that swelled full in her heart. Her lie was more justified than ever. She was sure—almost sure—he had found what she had told him he might find. And he did not hate her after all. He might even love her. She hoped he might, but told herself she feared it, feared it because he could only be disappointed; she was John Macey's wife and John Macey's wife she must and would always be. She wondered if he would ever see her and thank her and tell here he did not hate her. It was almost daylight when she slept.

In the afternoon Eugene called. She was hardly surprised. She was ready to forgive like a patient martyr when she went down to meet him. She was full of the meek and charitable spirit of the most innocent, most wronged. Her heart swelled fuller with compassion when she saw him. He did not realize she had entered the room. He sat back in his chair, tired and worn, his head resting on his hand. His face was white and there were lines of pain around his mouth. The spirit seemed burned out of him.

"Eugene."

He roused himself and got up slowly. He did not even hold out his hand. His eyes were heavy and sad. He was not the same man she had seen in his apartment.

"Sit down, Eugene. What is it? What have you come to tell me?"

He sank back into his chair, his arms falling at his sides.

"I've been through hell," he said slowly, painfully. "I guess you can see that. I've been tried and punished—for all my sins, I guess—and hope. I've lived through it. I'm a better man for it."

She spoke very softly, tenderly. "Then . . . you know?"

"Yes, Evelyn, I know. I've learned to suffer and I've learned to forgive. And I've you to thank. You showed me the truth or, anyway, you helped me find it, and your own example helped me to forgive. I was bitter, Evelyn, when you wouldn't tell me who he was. I didn't know. I couldn't know. I would never have dreamed it was John."

Evelyn's blood froze in her veins.

"*John*," she breathed.

The strength, the blood, the very life seemed slipping and falling out of her. It was weakness, pure physical weakness that kept her from revealing the truth that now her heart had been torn open and filled with salt.

"When I knew, I forgave at once and was ashamed because I'd judged you and judged you so wrongly," he went on. "Then I thought of your heart that was big enough and brave enough and generous enough to forgive John Macey and that helped me to forgive. So we're going to be married—next week—and she'll never know . . . that I know."

Evelyn heard herself like another person repeating the words:

"So you're going to be married, next week."

"Yes." His voice sounded faint and far away. "She *is* much changed. That's what made it hard for me to believe you in the first place. She's genuinely changed. I love her. I

know we're going to be happy—as happy as you and John."

Evelyn fought for her waning strength, straining every nerve. She must be alone. She must escape.

"I'm glad," she said at last, "—for you. Thanks for coming—and telling me. Go now, please."

The last of her strength was spent with the last word. As in a dream she felt him get up and move unsteadily out of the room. After a long time warmth came back to her body, but she did not dare try to rise. Only the clock, chiming four, drove her to the trial. In her room she closed her door and fell and crawled to her bed.

V

John Macey observed the change in his wife. He wondered at it and pondered over it and tried to divine or find the reason of it. Sometimes he even asked her why she seemed so cold, so spiritless. She never told him. She was afraid. She always denied that there was any change in her. She strove to be as she had always been to him. There was no more joy in life and she knew there could never be any more. Still she did not want to die. She was afraid to die. Death was the one thing more horrible than life. In life there was but one sweet fragment and the sweetness was almost gone from it. That fragment was her reputation of a virtuous woman—a woman of whom suspicion had never been and could never be breathed. But when she went to John Macey's arms there was no recompense in that saintly reputation. She hated those arms, hated them with all her soul, and yet they were all that she had in the world to protect her.

And, making the wormwood bitter, Eugene Wharton and his wife lived and prospered and were happy. Everyone knew they were happy. Everyone knew that they were head over heels in love a year after their marriage and that ten years after they were more in love than ever.

John Macey became reconciled. He had his books and he came to take his wife's changed nature as a matter of course. He paid more and more attention to the books and less and less to her. That might have been a blessing, but whenever he was away from her she had always in horrible prospect the time when he would come back. When he died she would have been almost happy, but the presence of death heightened her own fear of it.

Evelyn lived alone, surrounded by servants. She was afraid to be actually alone. She drew away from her friends, who wondered why for a little while and then ceased to care. One day, when she was an old woman, she read that Harriet Wharton was dead. Once again hope stirred in her heart. Hope dies very hard in some hearts. She did not go to the funeral, but she drove past the house and from her curtained car saw Eugene Wharton. He did not look old. He looked twenty years younger than she. He was straight and clean and strong, even in his grief.

She wondered if the far past meant anything to him, wondered if it meant enough to bring any consolation to her. When she went home she wrote a note to him, full of tender sympathy. She, having suffered loss, could understand and feel his suffering.

She waited long for the answer. It was weeks in coming. Many minutes she had to fight for courage to open it. It had been written in a firm, strong hand, firmer and stronger than when last he had written to her. There was no salutation, no signature. The words were few.

I knew you were lying all the time. If you had not lied to me about the girl I was to marry I would not have lied to you about your husband.

Evelyn sat with the paper in her lap. She would have died then, but she was afraid to die.

THE SHRINE

By Bruskin Gershwin

FASCINATED, he would stand before it, glorying. At such times, a sublime shivery sensation . . . an incomprehensive wonder at the beauty of it all. Reverent before it, he felt invigorated with the spirit of eternal youth and happiness. Such soul absorbing devotion to the embodiment of an ideal was unprecedented. . . .

And one day it fell and lay shattered in a thousand sharp, jagged fragments.

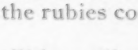
Panic-stricken, ashen-hued, he was scarcely able to mutter, "Gawd! Seven years' bad luck!"

GIFTS

By John Carvel

IF ye will have rubies
I will prick my thumb
With a silver needle
Till the rubies come.

If ye will have diamonds
I will go at dawn
Gathering ye dewdrops
Ere they be gone.



ALL good husbands try to imagine their wives as beautiful, enticing, piquant vampires who have hidden in their bosoms the hearts of angels. Some marriages are happy. The husbands have good imaginations.

THE PRINCESS FROM BUTTE

By Ford Douglas

I

THEY were about the same age, one would guess, and inseparable. They dressed alike—giving the beholder, at first sight, an uncomfortable and numbing sense of double vision—a twin riot of colored hatbands, striped shirts and shepherd checks. Their coats were of the pinch-back variety, their trousers cut exceedingly scant, making them look for all the world like a pair of very circumspect, thin-legged and speckled Plymouth Rock pullets.

To some of us they were aggressively and irritatingly immaculate—rather too smartly manicured and monogrammed. The corner of a spotless, lavender-edged handkerchief peeped from their breast pockets on which were embroidered their initials, "N" and "V," which symbols stood, so the hatboy, Jimmie Ryan, told the bellhops, for "Null" and "Void." But this, while in no sense a libel, was not true, for the letters were only tokens of their names, which were Nugent and Vincent.

As they held themselves somewhat aloof from the club rabble, no one paid much attention to them, and yet it cannot be said that their presence passed unnoticed. Their own appraisal and that of the members differed widely. For, although they told each other that they were a couple of gay young dogs, "regular fellows," devil-may-care men-'bout-town, they were known to the rougher element of the club—the unregenerate crowd that foregathered every noon about the round table in the far corner of the grill room and drank highballs in blocks of five—as "the two perfect ladies."

They were the very acme of punctuality. They came into the club every day at precisely noon, where they had a sandwich and a glass of milk—save on Saturdays, when they divided a half-order of goulash—and departed again at one. Had they not been rich men's sons they might have been dubbed "the Hallroom Boys"; but being well provided as to the present, and with even better prospects as to the future, the world had no quarrel with them.

Now, E. Algernon Nugent and Bertrand Leffingwell Vincent were really not half-bad. They had the same generous impulses as ordinary folk—only they were a little more conservative. For example, they could never see a picture show without pulling for the hero. This cost nothing. And besides, the moral support which they gave to struggling virtue (which was invariably triumphant at the end of the last reel) affected them with a pleasurable sense of their own rectitude. Neither of the young men smoked, nor did they drink, save perhaps a cocktail on some rare occasion when they threw public opinion to the dogs and started in to raise hell, regardless. But such dissipations, if the truth be told, were infrequent. Substantially, they were models of decorum, and the arbiters in all matters of social technique and etiquette in the younger set—of girls.

It was Algie and Bert who told the débutantes with whom they might, or might not, be seen. They controlled the social destinies of less fortunate young men with unseen hands. A

whisper, a frown, a shake of the head, and the thing was done, and some gay young Lothario went slithering out into the abyss of obscurity never to return. They were spies, too, in a sense, and they told—in strict confidence, of course—what they heard downtown and at the club. All of which, added to their own pulchritude, made them seem very pure and snowwhite indeed.

II

AFTER forty-five years of immunity, the society bacillus had entered the blood of Jim Hagan and the infection had spread throughout his woof and warp with alarming rapidity. Hagan was florid Irish, and self-made. Right now he was a railroad builder, with his square toes incased in hand-made shoes that cost him eighteen dollars. Only yesterday, it seemed to him, he was a barefoot boy ladling out water from a tin bucket to a gang of thirsty Italians on the grade. Today he was a millionaire with a private car, three automobiles, a valet, and an itch for a fashionable alliance. As water boy his possessions consisted of a straw hat, a shirt, and ten cents' worth of pants. It will be conceded that Hagan was a smart man.

And yet as brainy and as intimate with success as he was, he had failed in a project that lay very close to his heart. He had asked the hand of Olivia Shuck and had been refused. Why he wanted to marry Olivia, and why she had turned him down, were the two things that flabbergasted the town.

The Shucks were of the *noblesse*. As a family they were proud and rich—rich since the day that grandfather Shuck had traded old Chief Four-Dogs-With-Fleas a jug of squirrel whiskey for a square league of land that now was the heart of the city. The family prestige was further enhanced and glorified by the fact that a great-uncle, Erasmus P. Shuck, had established the first feed store in all the west country. These were facts, and Olivia had the documents to prove them.

Olivia was the belle of the town—or had been rather, at about the time of the World's Fair. She had been educated at Cedar Rapids and finished at Herkimer-on-the-Erie. Those golden days and moonlight nights on the old canal were her happiest. She often spoke of them.

But let us return to Hagan. Success had attended his courtship at first—and then, as a bolt from the blue, Olivia turned upon him the cold shoulder. He was both puzzled and angered. And when Hagan became angry he was dangerous. That someone had talked he felt sure, and he muttered threats highly tinctured by Gaelic—an affliction that showed itself when laboring under some strong excitement. He briefly reviewed the follies of his past. Had she heard of his youthful indiscretion with the daughter of the section boss at Cheyenne? Or was it his affair with the Los Angeles widow? Or had she learned of a certain adventure that past winter at Palm Beach? He determined to find out.

A month of quiet endeavor brought him no success. And then one day, as he was sitting in the club brooding over his trouble, he happened to glance up and discover two young men looking at him. The haste with which they made their exit aroused in him a vague suspicion, and this deepened into conviction when he patched together certain bits of comment and gossip. Moreover, now that he thought of it, he remembered that one of the young men was his rival—which one of them he did not know. In fact, he had paid no attention to the young men—didn't even know their names.

Here, if not a clue, was at least a theory, and Hagan revolved it over in his mind with fierce and vengeful eagerness. "It's those two hatbands that's doing it," he muttered. "I'm sure of it."

Now the comparative brain-power of the railroad man and Messrs. Null and Void was as infinity is to nothing, so when Hagan laid a trap the two hinter-

land McAllisters fell into it like a couple of sheep. It was a simple ruse—a bit of fictitious gossip that reached the young men *via* one of Hagan's intimates—and which was delivered, with some elaboration, at the Shuck mansion, so Hagan found out, in a trifle less than seven minutes. This is fast work, but in matters of this kind the telephone is a wonderful time-saver.

Then it was that Jim Hagan took the Corsican oath. The vendetta was on. It was to be a campaign of frightfulness, and, so far as he was concerned, there would be no quarter given or asked. Throwing aside for the time being the comparatively unimportant work of building railroads, Hagan consecrated his cerebrum to his revenge; and in the meantime, with Irish perfidy, he cultivated the young men. He entertained them royally. Nugent, or "Null," as he called him, he learned was his rival, though Olivia Shuck was nearly twice his age. Vincent, "Void," was as money-mad as his friend and was paying court to a widow old enough to be his mother. And in these ambitions he gave them much encouragement.

Algie and Bert, Hagan soon learned, were real powers among the anointed. No function, however great or small, could be a success in that far-flung outpost of culture, without their official O. K. and presence. They were the original Hallroom boys. The bizarre feature of Mrs. Pott's *bal poudre* were the products of their brains; they were the geniuses behind Mrs. Hoskin's studio ball; it was they who brought into vogue the daybreak breakfasts of ham and eggs at Jim's Chop House, and other bewildering novelties.

For a week Hagan trailed along with them in their monkeyshines with smiling face, but at times it was all he could do to keep from grabbing them and knocking their heads together. He had almost begun to despair when one morning he received a telegram:

Butte, Mont.

Will stop over Saturday on way East with sister. Reserve rooms for us at the Imperial. FAN.

As he held the yellow slip of paper in his hand he smiled reminiscently. What changes twenty years had wrought!

A moving-picture version of this story would show a slow dissolve from the middle-aged man seated in the club to a rugged young construction boss in a Butte dance hall. There would be booted miners dancing with short-skirted girls to the rhythm of fiddle and piano. It would depict vast quantities of "licker" being consumed at the bar at the end of the hall, and it would portray the activities of the proprietress, Fan Barclay, and the primitive though effective vampiring of her fat sister, Hazel Mae. And should the scenario writer care to follow further the thread of these two women's lives he would show their eventual restoration to virtue in their marriage—Fan to an Italian miner of sudden riches, and Hazel Mae to a well-to-do rancher. And perhaps the producer would put a sentence on the screen indicating that the erstwhile dance-hall keeper was henceforth to be known, facetiously, probably, as the Princess Mancini. . . . But all this is aside; suffice it to record here that Hagan thought over it all that night, and by morning he had hatched a scheme of deviltry to the very last detail.

III

"Now, boys," said Hagan, in the privacy of his suite, where he had lured them, "you know how it is. I'm not much of a hand with women—you don't learn it in the railroad business. But you boys"—he gazed at them admiringly—"you young fellows have a way with you. They'll be crazy about you! Both of 'em widows, and rich—and good-lookers, too. The elder of the sisters, Princess Mancini—palace in Florence, a villa on the Riveera, and all that sort of thing—is one of the biggest stockholders in the O. & N., and that's the reason I'm so concerned. I can land that contract if she pulls for me—and she'll do it if we give her a

good time—you boys know how women are that way. Now listen—if I get the business there's five thousand apiece in it for you."

Five thousand dollars! And this for entertaining a princess! The young men's eyes dilated.

"There's going to be a gymkhana at the Brookside Country Club Saturday afternoon," continued Hagan. "Of course I don't belong, but you boys do and you can take them out there—tea on the terrace at four—the sports—dinner at eight—a dance or so—and motor back about ten or eleven. Rather easy way to make five thousand, eh?"

The picture that Hagan painted seemed from fairyland. Here was romance, adventure — and perhaps a chance of remunerative matrimony! And all this to be crowded in one afternoon.

"Heaven!" ejaculated Algernon, weakly.

Bertrand said nothing. He was quite overcome.

IV

Hagan picked them up downtown at two-thirty as agreed. The ladies in yards of veiling and chiffon were with their host in the back seat of the car, and as the young men stepped in and seated themselves they were introduced with some formality.

"Princess, allow me to present my very dear friends, Mr. Algernon Nugent and Mr. Bertrand Vincent."

The young men bowed as low as their cramped quarters would permit. They were visibly impressed at once, for no greater display of diamonds had they ever seen outside a showcase.

In turn they were presented to the princess's sister, Mrs. Hixon, and they marveled again. For Hazel Mae was adorned not only with a profusion of gems but was further ornamented by a vast quantity of plumes which gave her more than plump figure the appearance of a bursted feather mattress.

Secretly both of the young men began to worry; a fear crept over them that their party might appear a trifle conspicuous.

Now to Algernon and Bertrand the country club was a holy of holies. Here the Brahmins of the social world met in leisurely and dignified recreation. It was a gossipry of many thousand horsepower, where individuals, were made or unmade in almost the twinkling of an eye—or a tongue—a Place de la Concorde with the guillotine working on high with the muffler cut out. Though Algie and Bert had belonged for years, they had never been without a feeling of awe, once they entered the sacred portals.

As the machine rolled along through the suburbs Hagan did most of the talking. He was in rare good humor, and he was exerting himself, too—working under forced draft, did they but know it. Several times the ladies reached for the conversational spotlight, but Hagan took it away from them. He talked incessantly, lauding without stint the prodigality and munificence of his two young friends as entertainers, and hinting of sundry long and cooling drinks to be had upon their arrival. He was successful in creating, at least in the rear seat of the car, quite a thirst.

As they neared the entrance to the grounds they were met by a machine coming out. It was being driven at a furious pace and the chauffeur on recognizing Hagan's car suddenly put on his brakes. "Mr Hagan!" he bawled. "A telegram—most important — the clerk took it down over the 'phone and I was a-comin' to meet you."

He thrust a hastily written message in Hagan's hand, who read it apparently at a glance.

"Good Lord!" he cried. "There's a cave-in on the Burlington tunnel and a thousand men imprisoned." He handed the note to Vincent. "It's a matter of life and death and I must get back to town at once and get a special with doctors and everything." He jumped out of the machine and climbed into the other car. "Now you boys take care of the ladies—I'm off!"

He waved his hand to convey to the

astounded young men anything left unsaid, and disappeared down the road in a cloud of dust. Their car proceeded and a moment later drew up under the club *porte-cochère*.

V.

If the young men live to be ten thousand years old—if they reach their millionth reincarnation—they will never forget the spectacular entry of the ladies from Butte into the Brookside Country Club.

As they stepped from the car there came a murmuring from the rocking chairs, low at first and then louder and louder, and there was a leveling of lorgnettes, steadily sighted like muskets from a platoon of infantry. Never, perhaps, since Halley's comet, has there been such a concentration of lenses. At the sight of the two strange figures so gaily bedecked in feathers and jewels the *grandes dames* and grandmothers raised their eyebrows, while débutantes and the divorcées sniggered.

It was the princess who first spoke. She said: "My Gawd, Nugent, git me a drink. I'm as dry as a desert freighter at Big Sandy crossing!"

Under the impact of this, E. Algernon Nugent reeled. And then as the princess smiled at him he saw for the first time that her three front teeth were golden—large, costly slugs of the precious metal they were, fashioned in the shape of upper incisors, but to the terrorized youth they looked much as three gold-plated badges of the metropolitan police force do to a felon. Mr. Vincent was affected in the same way. For, though the day was not excessively warm, the perspiration broke out as on a fat man in a Turkish bath.

They were undone. The social edifice which they had raised after years of effort had fallen about them a ruin. Escape was plainly the thing. They gave the long row of rocking chairs one despairing glance and started.

"*Here! Fellers!*" It was Hazel Mae calling to them. "Come back here and order that drink. Whadda ya take us fer—a couple of camels?"

There was an imperious ring in Mrs. Hixon's voice that froze them in their tracks. Then, in anguished obedience, they turned and slowly came back to the table which the ladies had preempted near the door. It was only vaguely, for he was past all strong emotion now, that Nugent saw at the next table Olivia Shuck the centre of a pop-eyed group of dowagers who were giving vent to low and high gasps and snorts of astonishment and fury.

"Now then," said the younger sister in a businesslike tone, at the same time indicating chairs into which the young men collapsed, "let's split a quart of Old Crow!"

Mr. Vincent could only roll his eyes helplessly, at which the princess smiled a golden smile of understanding. It was not the first time she had seen that haunting look of wretchedness.

"Kid," she said, not unkindly, "maybe you're a little short—we all git thataway sometimes. Here"—she lifted her skirt over a buxom knee and from her stocking drew forth a compact bale of yellow-back currency—"spend this like it was your'n."

VI

It was not a case of malingering, the doctors said. The Cheyne-Stokes breathing that E. Algernon Nugent exhibited upon the front veranda of the Brookside Country Club was unfeigned. It frightened them all for a time, and there was talk from the wise ones in the crowd that gathered about of heat strokes and epilepsy.

But the chief regret of the visiting ladies was that it broke up the party—and just as their good time had started.

The young men lived abroad a few years, and now they are quiet and peace-loving citizens in the community. Jim Hagan is still a bachelor and viciously opposed to matrimony at any price. And Olivia Shuck has a habit of beginning her observations with "I remember when——"

THE DRUMS

By Robert McClurg

IN at his window came the throbbing of drums. In the street below the Salvation Army thundered its call. The drums throbbed like tom-toms, startling the city. He listened and dreamed. . . .

He dreamed of the dances in circuses. . . .

He dreamed of naked Indans dancing round and round in honor of the Sun; warriors in paint and feather bending and leaping in the dance of War —the Corn Dance—the Rain Dance. . . .

He dreamed of blue lines and gray marching to battle with trains of artillery. . . .

He dreamed of the tocsin arousing the *sansculottes* to war. . . .

He dreamed of everything—everything, except the silver streets of heaven and the immaculate God.

SONNET

By David Morton

AS in a smoky tavern, late o' nights,
Where shapes grotesque and disputants profane
Huddle in groups beneath the sputtering lights,
And curse or jest, and laugh or curse again,—
So in the shadowy chamber of my mind,
The drunken prate, the angry wranglers swear,
And all the room is raucous with their kind,
Till suddenly a silence falls,—and there,

The thought of You, like a grave, smiling ghost,
Enters and stands, bewildering and wise,
Till, one by one, that hushed and baffled host,
Turn off dark ways, with shamed averted eyes;—
And all the chamber sweetens with your fame,
As might a tavern, if an angel came.

THE LITTLE SOMETHING

By Paul Hervey Fox

IMMACULATE in white linen and clean serge, the admirable Safford thrust out a calm, brown hand to rake in a scattered litter of poker-chips. He was a huge, handsome man with a lazy, rather stupid smile, and the geniality of a big dog. Though Safford was no longer of the army, he had lost nothing of his old straightness, his early suggestion of indolent power.

He was in excellent fettle this afternoon; the luck was running the right way; the boys were a jolly sort; the weather was very decent; and the club-bar seemed to have undergone a subtle, delightful improvement. So it was hard that, a few minutes later, in the restrained excitement of a reckless jack-pot, a page, passing the doorway of the card and lounge room, should put his head inside and bawl with melancholy foreboding: "Captain Safford."

Safford cursed beautifully, found a substitute for his place, and strode off with his swinging gait, in which somehow the clank of a sabre seemed vaguely missing, towards the 'phone-booths. His faint hope that it might at least prove to be some pretty woman, was shattered by the announcement over the wire of a telegram. This ran:

Your uncle Petrie is on his way. He will be here this evening, so I suppose you had better come home. I tell you this, of course, for my good, not for yours. *Violet Brooke.*

Safford dropped the receiver on the hook, frowned, and uttered a quite audible "Damn!" in his good-natured, growling voice. He was rather more irritated by the telegram itself than by the disconcerting content of its message. For the name signed was his wife's—his wife's, at any rate before she had married him.

That little slap, a reminder of recently instituted conditions, stung. Subtlety was foreign to the admirable Safford's nature, but he was not insensible to the flickings of the lash which Violet, that proud woman of ice and irony, was forever plying. Further, in this itemizing of grievances, the telegram had been sent collect, and its careless wordiness seemed deliberate. Safford spent his money with an indifferent hand, but somehow this matter of mean pennies set his nerves jangling.

He went back for his hat, and made his apologies and his escape. The thing was really important: no message to be awarded a pucker of the lips and a defiant laugh. For Uncle Petrie was Safford's sole and generous backer in a world which declared the Captain quite devoid of financial gifts.

Violet was the primary cause of his troubles, he reflected, as he summoned a taxi with his stick and suffered himself to be jolted up town. He had dropped out of the army to marry her, thrown himself by long distance 'phone on Uncle Petrie's mercy, and taken a lease of a brokerage office. Engineering, the only other trick he knew, was quite out of his line, declared Safford; but he had, he added, an instinct for gambling. He had the instinct undoubtedly, but very little else. So Uncle Petrie, that cracked old egotist

who kindly segregated himself in some forlorn locality of the West, paid the office rent, and gave his nephew a handsome income to fritter away as he chose. Uncle Petrie, it is true, could easily afford to do this; for not even he, himself, knew the exact extent of his own fortune.

"With this and what you can make in the street, my boy, you ought to be amply provided for," Uncle Petrie had written; and if Safford hadn't kept up 'the office,' he would have been sufficiently affluent even for fingers as loose as his. He was actually too blind to perceive that he was losing money year after year in business; but the chances are that even if he had confronted himself with the facts of the case, he would have continued the sham with open eyes: since it gave him standing among his fellows, and deluded Uncle Petrie with the wholesome belief that he was assisting, not completely providing.

Violet Brooke, in changing her name to Safford, had found the man of her dreams equally a dream—worse, a bad one. In the early days, enveloping him in her romantic fancies, she saw the Captain as a strong, silent man with a quiet courage, keen, intuitive mind, a wistfully gentle understanding. When illusions faded before reality, she discovered that he was simply a large, healthy male with a crude humour, a blindly selfish masculinity, a thick spiritual skin, and a handsome face. Into the matter of their pathetically amusing quarrels it is not necessary to venture; it is sufficient to set down that in the end, after a ludicrous scene in which the Captain roared unintelligibly and Violet flung out cruel stabs with a mocking, maddening smile, Safford consented to split the income into correct halves and thereafter to take up his residence at his club.

There was no hint of a legal separation on either's part; each wanted the thing managed quietly. Safford knew, and Violet knew, that Uncle Petrie, the crotchetty sentimentalist, would withdraw his favor instantly should the wind blow news of the disturbance to his ears. And Uncle Petrie was an old man with only Safford for heir. The Captain hadn't any desire to see some hospital or some college enriched at his expense.

He had managed to keep up the pretense excellently well. Uncle Petrie harbored the fancy that he was the kind humanitarian who scattered breadcrumbs before the dovecote. And if they were good, some day, he hinted pretty plainly, they were to have the run of an entire bakery. The post-marital arrangement was satisfactory to the party of the first part and the party of the second; a divorce *de thoro* was practically all that was desired by either. Violet was happy in her friends and her freedom; and Safford found a satisfaction in returning to his old life of careless impulses and individual direction. When they met, their anger never boiled high; it was a sharp, scrappy, contemptuous attitude that each was able successfully to maintain.

And now here was Uncle Petrie coming on one of his confounded trips East! Safford moodily realized that it meant he would have to leave his comfortable club and take up life with Violet for, perhaps, a fortnight—a space of time set to the accompaniment of a ghastly simulation of billing and cooing.

When he reached the house, he discovered that his wife had dressed for dinner and was awaiting him.

"You've come at last, have you?" she queried tartly. "It was lucky I knew your Uncle's writing and opened that letter instead of forwarding it on to you. If I hadn't, I would have had my troubles explaining why you weren't home."

Safford lifted his huge, shaggy head. "By Jove! You opened my mail. Rotten impudence!"

"Oh, for heaven's sake, stop!" entreated Violet wearily. "If I hadn't done so, where would you have been? And if you think I want to pretend I'm in love with a fool before your silly

Uncle, you're mistaken." She laughed unpleasantly.

"Opened my mail, eh?" repeated Safford with a dull resentment.

Uncle Petrie appeared almost before the appointed hour, a brusque, sputtering old gentleman with a bullet head in which irrelevant thoughts flew as frequently as the twinges through his gouty foot.

"Tut! tut!" said Uncle Petrie, hugely pleased as Violet kissed him on both cheeks and Safford shook hands and adopted a terrible grin that was intended to convey his delight. "Tut! tut! Demonstrative, hey? Bad taste, bad taste!"

The old gentleman hobbled his way to a chair and spoke about the discomforts of his trip with an obvious affection for details. Presently dinner was announced.

At the table he found himself enfiladed with smiles. He glanced significantly at the couple. "Happy, eh? Tut! tut! Never do to be otherwise, children. . . . Never, never do! Fond of each other, eh? Mustn't hesitate to show it before your old uncle. He's your best friend. He has your interests at heart. . . . Soup? Good! Always take soup. . . . Hah! That is —what was I saying?"

Violet hastened to assure him that soup was the present subject of his discourse. She didn't want him to wander back to the embarrassing topic of her happy marriage.

Uncle Petrie smiled blandly. "Ah, yes. Quite so. . . . As I was saying, children, soup . . . soup. . . ." He brandished a pepper shaker vaguely and added in a jerk. "You love each other tremendously, don't you? Mustn't be afraid of showing it before your old uncle. He likes to see young people affectionate. Ha, ha! . . . Yes, I'm going to Boston tomorrow."

"To Boston?" echoed Safford in his heavy voice after a furtive scowl in Violet's direction. "What for?"

"Hum, ha! Thought you knew," rejoined the old gentleman testily. "Ought to show some consideration for your nearest relative. Well, shan't tell you now. If you've been inattentive, you must suffer for it, you must suffer. . . . Suffering's a terrible thing. Hope you never know it, my dear Violet. Terrible, terrible. My gout now. And my heart. Failing, says Doctor McCready. Failing! Sent me on here to see a Boston specialist, as I was just saying. Of course, I'll leave you tomorrow morning. Stop here on my way home. Examination, you know, examination. Wonderful things. . . . Ever study Greek?"

Uncle Petrie puffed and rattled volubly to a jerky conclusion. Suddenly he laid his hand on Safford's arm and scrutinized his nephew with grey eyes that revealed something of the foundation shrewdness upon which was oddly built his errant, eccentric mentality. "How are you doing, my boy?" he asked. "Well? Are you sure you're quite happy? Have you everything you want? Everything? Think!"

The Captain stroked his mustache and deliberated upon the amount he ought to ask.

"Well, Uncle," he began with a slow, hesitaing drawl. "I won't say that a little something wouldn't—"

To Safford's bewilderment, Uncle Petrie reached over the table and shook hands with insane enthusiasm.

"A little something, eh?" he repeated in his senile voice. "A little something! You're a wit, my boy, a veritable wit. So you knew what I was planning, knew it all the time! Well, I've a little something for you. Tomorrow, you'll be pleased—tomorrow! . . . Clever, clever boy!" He wagged his finger back and forth at his large nephew until his hand collided with a glass and tumbled it to the cloth. "Oh, what a bother!" he changed with absurd abruptedness; "what a nuisance! Might arrange your glasses in a better position, my boy. Might show some consideration for an elderly relative.

Rude, rude, downright rude. . . . Yes, that's right, have it cleared up now. But you should have thought of this before. Very, very vexing!"

II

THAT evening Safford endeavored to coax out the explanation of Uncle Petrie's mysterious hints as to a "little something," but the old gentleman this time retained his irritable mood and refused to be budged from it before his early retirement.

"Oh, well," thought Safford, "probably he'll hand over a comfortable check in the morning. I can use it, too, by Jove! He's a good old boy, but he's mad, quite mad." And he strolled off to his old, unused den for a pipe and a nightcap of Scotch. He left Violet reading in the library, but her mocking smile, her disdainfully lowered eyelids seemed to follow him persistently upstairs.

To the relief of the Saffords, Uncle Petrie left for Boston the next morning. He was at all times a harrowing guest; and in the present case where their pretense was hourly threatened, his visit assumed an aspect of the tragic. He was to be back, he told them, in some two or three days. In the meantime a pleasant surprise awaited Violet; as for Safford he had already guessed it, clever dog, clever! The Captain smiled knowingly or attempted to; and a little later, when Uncle Petrie had departed, he went upstairs to prepare for his own return to Clubland.

"You might 'phone me, Violet, as soon as he's back," he suggested. "I don't see why you have to send me a telegram every rotten time. My voice over the wire won't contaminate you, y' know."

"At least," retorted Violet, slashing clumsily, "a telegram saves me the annoyance of hearing your ridiculous answers."

The Captain made no endeavor to reply; he whistled indifferently, and rearranged his tie in the mirror. Almost at the juncture of his departure, half an hour later, a maid thrust her head in the doorway and stared with perplexed eyes at Violet.

"There's—there's someone to see you, Ma'am," she reported in a whisper.

Violet, wrinkling her brow with curiosity concerning so early a caller, descended the stairs, Safford, hat in hand, stick over arm, followed her on his way to the door. He stopped and glanced into the little reception-room as Violet entered. As he did so, a tall, rigid woman came into the hallway, gave him an unperturbed glance, and passed calmly out of the house. Then Safford, too, stepped into the room.

There was only a little girl there of, perhaps, eleven years of age. She was gazing at Violet with wide, solemn eyes that missed nothing. Her brown hair was crinkly and its long curls looked like knotted strands of dry rope. She was clad with much expense and no taste. She was all legs. She was singularly an unesthetic object.

"I'm Lucinda," she explained easily, all too easily for a child. "Your Uncle Petrie told you I was coming, didn't he? That was my new governess who brought me here. Your Uncle Petrie told me I'd have to introduce myself, and not wait for him to come back."

The blank amazement of her audience went home to her; her eyes wrinkled like a terribly old woman's, and she supplemented the look with an incongruous giggle. It was a giggle that jarred on the Captain and his wife. It bespoke an assumed intimacy, a friendship, even a relationship which they hardly cared to recognize.

Lucinda ceased giggling and illumined matters. "Your Uncle Petrie has adopted me," she declared. "He's sent me here to stay until he comes back from Boston."

Safford's jaw dropped. "You're

not er—that is—you're not going to live with us in future?" he queried anxiously.

"Of course not!" protested Lucinda as if insulted by the suggestion. "I'm going back West with your Uncle Petrie."

The frozen smile on Violet's face suddenly took on a kinder aspect. "Well, dear," she said, "we are very glad to have you with us now. I will have the maid show you to the guest room, and you may take off your things."

When they were alone, Violet and the Captain exchanged hasty whispers.

"That brat!" ejaculated the latter, mopping his brow. "That brat! . . . So that's what the old ass meant by a 'little something,' is it? . . . Oh, my God! . . . . Now look here, Violet. We've got to keep up the game before the kid or she'll carry the news to Uncle. I hope you understand that."

"You need hardly tell what I ought to do," Violet retorted. "The only arrangement we can make is that we'll take her by turns. That little girl would see through things in a minute when Uncle Petrie would take a year. I wonder what he's going to do with her? Do you suppose he intends to leave her the money? Do you suppose possibly—oh, this is awful! Why, why did I ever marry into your family?"

"Don't become hysterical about it now," ordered Safford in a gruff undertone. "We've got to use our heads and use 'em quick. Uncle Petrie will be back in two or three days. We can stand this kid till then if we have to, and find out later which way the wind lies. Besides—"

"Hush!" whispered Violet suddenly, "here she comes. I'll take her the rest of this morning. Mind, you'll have to go around with her this afternoon."

III

Uncle Petrie mercifully returned in two days instead of three, but it was not a second too soon. Safford, as the best method of forgetting Lucinda's presence, had taken her to the playhouses, hoping, for once, that the pieces would last forever. Her frank stare made him uncomfortable. "Seems as if she was reading your mind," he commented to Violet on one occasion. Violet sniffed, but secretly admitted that she, too, was nervous under that penetrating stare, weighted with the intuitions of youth. But it was only when they were at meals that the situation seemed insupportable.

To counterfeit smiles, to make kind remarks that stuck in her throat to the heavy Safford, to hear him choke over some distressing flattery in return, was a kind of comic agony. Lucinda watched these performances with her solemn eyes, and in fear that she might perceive their absence of affection, they exaggerated the pretense to proportions almost burlesque. It was a pretense that could not be relaxed, for Lucinda proved far more vigilant than Uncle Petrie. The first evening at dinner assured them of that.

A sneer of Violet's for the Captain's benefit was intercepted by the astute child.

"Why are you making faces?" questioned Lucinda.

"It's just a form of fun that I have, dear," replied Violet in a queer voice.

And a little later when Safford growled something under his breath, Lucinda looked up sharply, all interrogation. The Captain grinned weakly. "I—I always do that to people I like," he stammered. Then he glared at his plate, and his lips worked soundlessly. After that he exercised greater caution.

Early in the third morning Uncle Petrie appeared.

"Well, Lucinda," he asked, "how do you like your new cousins? How do you find your adopted relatives? Eh, little girl?"

The Saffords waited breathlessly.

"Very nice," answered Lucinda with apparent candor, and surveyed them with a look that sent the chills to the Captain's marrow. She giggled immediately as if she surmised his agitation. "They act so awful queer with each other; they—"

Violet bit her lip and crumpled her handkerchief, but it was Uncle Petrie himself who came to the rescue. "Ha, my dear, you don't know anything about that—not yet. Little girls ought not to know much about love. No, no! . . . And how do you, Violet, like the new addition to your family? Before Violet could frame an answer, the old gentleman's eyes grew suddenly vague. "I must tell you!" he ejaculated abruptly, "I must tell you! My physician informs me that I shall have to go home immediately, as my condition is ah—anything but promising. In great danger. Great danger. I shall, of course, take Lucinda with me. Hah! I know you want her, but I'm a selfish old man. Must have my own way, must humour the old fellow, you know."

Uncle Petrie declared he would stay the day out and leave the next morning for the West, and the Saffords heaved a sigh of relief. The old gentleman's health was in a bad way and rest in his accustomed environment was imperative. The Captain cursed Lucinda privately, and wondered what difference her adoption would make in his fortunes. His income was in no way threatened, he knew, but he had fears for his inheritance. He decided he must speak out bold and frank to Uncle Petrie before the day was over.

He managed to get the old gentleman alone before the end of the afternoon, and put his point rather stumblingly.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid, my boy," Uncle Petrie declared. "I've enough, I've enough for everyone. Lucinda hasn't ousted you from my affections. I've made a new will, made one which can't help but please you all. Speaking of Lucinda, she's a perfectly marvelous child! Wonderful little creature, wonderful. Such a mind, such self-reliance! I trust her quite as much as I do you. Quite as much."

Safford reported to Violet the outcome of his investigations. "He was mighty dim about it," he said, "but I gather that the old boy is going to divide the property between that brat and us. Well, thank God, there's enough to go around, and if he doesn't adopt a whole asylum in the meantime, I'm safe and so are you."

IV

It was at dinner that evening that the catastrophe occurred. Uncle Petrie complained of faintness when he came to the table, but he talked as energetically and as irrelevantly as ever. Suddenly he put his hand over his heart. His face grew very white. But a moment later he resumed his talk. He was speaking of Lucinda at the time, praising her before her face while the Saffords, all unnoted, writhed at his words. Lucinda, herself, with a mock demure smile, gazed down modestly and appeared to cover her confusion quite capably by eating at a gallop.

"A most sagacious child!" the old gentleman was saying. "A most sagacious child. Why I'd give her credit for seeing things that I wouldn't for a woman of your age, Violet. Yes, indeed! A most sa——"

The word ended in a groan, and Uncle Petrie toppled from his chair to the floor. Excited servants carried him upstairs and a doctor was instantly summoned. When he arrived and examined the old gentleman, his verdict was final.

"Heart failure," he announced. "He won't live an hour."

"Poor old boy!" said Safford. "He's been good to me, mighty good. By George, this has been sudden!"

Violet was kneeling by the bedside, and Lucinda with a scared face was standing stiffly near her.

Uncle Petrie's eyelids quivered, his

eyes opened and fell upon the group about him. He smiled very faintly.

"I'm going," he said weakly. "Going. Tut! tut! Mustn't make such long faces. Not of great importance anyway—I see that—now. And I want to tell you what I'm—what I've done for you. Come—come closer."

The doctor had moved into the shadows of the room. The three figures obeyed the old gentleman's instructions. Then Uncle Petrie feebly put Violet's hand in her husband's huge palm and laid Lucinda's on top of that.

"I've—I've left you all my money, my boy," Uncle Petrie got out with labor, "left it to you in trust for Lucinda here. Under my new will which I made in the event of anything like—like this happening, she is to be brought up by you and Violet. Though, of course, I trust you—trust you implicitly, I made a provision that if you two should—should at any time disagree or —or have trouble, the money is to go to Lucinda directly through—through a guardian whom I have named. You see, I,—you see——"

Safford stared with a drawn face into the eyes of his wife. For an instant he thought himself capable of laughing away such conditions, of 'going in on his own,' a free agent. Then for the first time the discovery smote him that he was powerless to make money; he would have to live on the ample interest of Uncle Petrie's fortune, have to comply with its conditions. He saw in a glance all the careless life he loved vanish before him, saw himself living under the hateful gaze of "that brat," living a hateful lie of affection for Violet. How could he go through with it? Yet—what else could he do? In Violet's eyes some similar message of despair was returned; and in his disappointment Safford moaned aloud.

Uncle Petrie's shuddering eyelids opened for one last moment before the end. "Mustn't do that, my boy," he whispered. "I'm not worth it, not—worth it. You and Violet, you . . . the child—you'll all be happy. . . . You'll be happy . . . together."

And with that unconsciously sardonic utterance Uncle Petrie, the eccentric sentimentalist, gave up the ghost.

THE LAST DAY

By Louis Untermeyer

I NEVER thought that love could mean so much
Beyond the passion we could not resist,
Until the end, when you turned back to touch
That rustic bench where first we sat and kissed.

I never saw the cruel world so fair,
Nor knew how fast youth's bit of flame must die,
Until I saw you standing silent there
With your young face against that crumbling sky.

TWO WOMEN'S LETTERS

THEN—AND NOW

By Marguerite Buller Allan

I

I SIT at the door of our cave, Belovéd, and watch for you.

I make a fire, and I cook food; but it has no taste eaten so, in solitude.

I wander in the sunlight, but it does not warm me. Your absence has made the sun a chill and distant thing.

The wild grapes are purple now. The vine is heavy with ripe grapes.

Over the green moss are scattered little red leaves. The trees are weeping red leaves. . . . What does that mean?

Last night I sat beside the fire—the cat was there also. I said to him: "Do you remember the Man with his black eyes and his thick black hair? Do you remember how he laughed loudly when the morning was bright, and how softly he whispered when the old moon turned her eye upon us?"

I asked the cat these things as we sat by the fire, and he said, "I remember, I remember" . . . . and it sounded as purring.

At the fire he looked sadly, shutting his eyes.

If you do not come back soon to me, Belovéd, what shall I do?

II

I sat for hours on the veranda waiting for you. How mean of you not to come! I am so disappointed.

I waited until dinner time for you, and then I sat down all alone at that huge table, and couldn't eat anything. Do you imagine I'll have all your favorite dishes prepared next time I think you're coming? No! indeed!

I wandered about the garden all afternoon.

The grapes are ripe on the vine, but the trees look thin and naked, the leaves have almost all fallen.

I hate these autumn days, I feel so nervous and restless.

Last night after the servants had gone to bed, I sat alone by the fire. The cat came in and sat purring beside me. I told it you were a heartless one—a wretch, not to have come back, and I tried not to remember your dear eyes, nor imagine I heard your laugh. . . .

But I did; and I wept. I was weeping and the cat only shut its horrid indifferent eyes!

I am deciding how I can punish you.

If you do not come back soon what shall I do? . . . I know!

I shall send you a long telegram asking why—and I'll send it C. O. D.!

MY TAILOR*

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Alfred Capus

de l'Académie Française

Translated by BARRETT H. CLARK

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

PIERRE, *a bachelor.*
MARGUERITE, *a sweet one.*
CLÉMENCE, *a servant.*

SCENE.

A small drawing-room in Pierre's apartment in Paris.

TIME.

Yesterday afternoon.
As the curtain rises Pierre has just entered. He hands his hat and walking-stick to Clémence.

CLÉMENCE:

The postman came when Monsieur was out, and brought a registered letter. He will bring it next time.

PIERRE:

Good. And when is that?

CLÉMENCE:

Three, or half-past. (*She starts to go.*)

PIERRE:

Wait. A lady may possibly call.

CLÉMENCE:

A lady?

PIERRE:

Bring her in here at once.

CLÉMENCE:

Without asking for her name?

PIERRE:

Yes. And if you did, she would not tell you. Understand?

CLÉMENCE:

Yes, Monsieur. (*She turns to go, but comes back.*) Oh, and if the postman *should* come when the lady is here, shall I interrupt Monsieur? I want to be on the safe side.

PIERRE:

You may rap very discreetly on the door. (*Catching sight of a bill on the table.*) What's this?

CLÉMENCE:

A bill that the concierge just brought up. I forgot to give it to Monsieur.

PIERRE:

Why, if you please?

CLÉMENCE:

It wasn't important. It's from M. Plantin, the tailor.

PIERRE:

I see. (*Reads.*) "On the request of

* *All rights reserved.*

M. Plantin," hm!—"pay three thousand two hundred francs." So my tailor is threatening me!

CLÉMENCE:

It's perfectly shameful!

PIERRE:

Three thousand two hundred francs! I had no idea I owed him three thousand two hundred francs!

CLÉMENCE:

(*Coming close to him.*) Monsieur won't be angry, will he, if I ask him one question?

PIERRE:

Go ahead, Clémence.

CLÉMENCE:

Is Monsieur quite out of cash?

PIERRE:

Why do you ask?

CLÉMENCE:

Because I was saying yesterday to Jean that we'd be only too glad to stay with Monsieur if he didn't pay us our wages—

PIERRE:

Thank you.

CLÉMENCE:

Monsieur can pay us later—with interest. My husband and I have great confidence in you.

PIERRE:

No, no, Clémence, I am now down to my last sou, I am simply—in straits.

CLÉMENCE:

Monsieur is too generous to the ladies.

PIERRE:

And then you know I am expecting a letter from my uncle.

CLÉMENCE:

(*Smiling.*) With money?

PIERRE:

Yes. (*The bell rings.*) Oh, there—

CLÉMENCE:

I'll open the door. Perhaps it's the postman.

PIERRE:

Or the lady.

CLÉMENCE

(*At the door.*) Which would Monsieur prefer, the lady or the postman?

PIERRE:

The lady, because the postman is always sure of coming again. (*Clémence goes out. Pierre looks at his watch.*) Half-past two—when she said she would come. (*The door opens, and Marguerite enters. Pierre advances to meet her.*) This is indeed delightful!

MARGUERITE:

Too delightful, I'm afraid. I'd like to go at once.

PIERRE:

That would be criminal. Please sit down, and take off your hat. Shall I help you?

MARGUERITE:

It's scarcely worth while. I know what you are thinking.

PIERRE;

If you knew what I thought, you would take off your hat.

MARGUERITE:

You think, "She's an ordinary little flirt."

PIERRE:

Do you imagine for one moment—

MARGUERITE:

I wouldn't give you my address, and so I went hither and thither, but you insisted on following me. I took a cab and you took another and followed me. I spent two hours riding about.

PIERRE:

I offered to reimburse you.

MARGUERITE:

Finally, I had to take refuge at a friend's home. Some days later, we met by chance. Since I am here today,

you must think me exceedingly common and vulgar.

PIERRE:

And you must think me a cad! I will admit, if at first you had accepted an invitation to dine with me, I should doubtless have spent an agreeable evening, but I shouldn't have had a very high opinion of you.

MARGUERITE:

While after two months—?

PIERRE:

After two months, I say to myself: "She is certainly a married woman." I am right, am I not?

MARGUERITE:

In a way, you *are* right. But you are quite mistaken if you think me capable of any real folly.

PIERRE:

I shouldn't think of allowing you to exceed the bounds of propriety.

MARGUERITE:

A woman who hasn't enough to keep her interested may be led by curiosity, for the sake of a little adventure—but there is a vast gulf between that and forgetting one's duties.

PIERRE:

I don't ask you to forget your duties, I only wish you would not keep thinking of them.

MARGUERITE:

You may rest assured that if you had not mentioned the names of three or four common acquaintances I should never have consented to come here, on any pretext whatsoever.

(*She sits down.*)

PIERRE:

I can quite believe it. But you must admit that my behavior has been irreproachable. I told you my name at once, and was tactful enough not to insist upon knowing your husband's. I merely asked you for your first name.

MARGUERITE:

I'll wager you've already forgotten it.

PIERRE:

(*Going to her.*) I'll whisper it to you.

MARGUERITE:

(Edging away from him.) I can hear from this distance quite as well.

PIERRE:

It's Marguerite. My favorite name.

MARGUERITE:

How nice! (*Pierre again attempts to come close to her.*) Will you be good enough to stay where you are? So far, you have been courteous and gallant; don't spoil it all.

PIERRE:

I adore you. I loved you from the first moment—

MARGUERITE:

And my presence here proves that you are not entirely indifferent to me. There is no graver step for a married woman.

PIERRE:

I don't deny it.

MARGUERITE:

A woman should think well for months and months.

PIERRE:

But you must always end by deciding yes.

MARGUERITE:

And even then, she must consider—and wait, wait for the psychological, the magnificent and beautiful moment. A woman's only excuse is in giving her love as one gives a birthday present.

PIERRE:

And today is my birthday!

MARGUERITE:

Before I decide to interest myself in you, and possibly come to love you, I must first learn something of your habits, your tastes, your manner of living.

PIERRE:

Of course. Ask me, I'll answer.

MARGUERITE:

Don't walk about like that. Sit down, as you asked me to do. There, Not so close

PIERRE:

I am ready.

MARGUERITE:

How old are you? Answer me truthfully.

PIERRE:

Thirty-four.

MARGUERITE:

Have you a profession?

PIERRE:

No.

MARGUERITE:

Then you have some sort of income?

PIERRE:

I have.

MARGUERITE:

You are a waster, a man-about-town.

PIERRE:

I beg your pardon!

MARGUERITE:

You dissipate.

PIERRE:

But, I beg you—

MARGUERITE:

There's not much to tempt a woman—

PIERRE:

I am not in the least dissipated.

MARGUERITE:

Not much to tempt a woman in that case, either. Have you—well, another woman friend?

PIERRE:

Of course not! Would I in that case have made love to you?

MARGUERITE:

You used to have one?

PIERRE:

Perhaps.

MARGUERITE:

Did you leave her, or she you?

PIERRE:

I left her: my integrity forces me to confess the truth.

MARGUERITE:

Why?

PIERRE:

Why did I leave her?

MARGUERITE:

Yes.

PIERRE:

Because she fell in love with another man.

MARGUERITE:

Do you live a regular life?

PIERRE:

That depends on what you mean.

MARGUERITE:

For instance, do you gamble?

PIERRE:

Oh, I—

MARGUERITE:

I feel sure you do.

PIERRE:

I say—

MARGUERITE:

You are a gambler. Oh, dear! I have a perfect horror of gambling.

PIERRE:

I'll reform.

MARGUERITE:

I doubt it. (*She rises.*)

PIERRE:

My word of honor, I will reform. The moment you came into the room, I swore I would never touch another card.

MARGUERITE:

That was probably because you lost heavily last night.

PIERRE:

That was not the only reason.

MARGUERITE:

The worst thing a woman can do is to have anything to do with a gambler. When a gambler has lost, he will hardly look at her.

PIERRE:

But when he wins?

MARGUERITE:

He deceives her. I had a cousin once who beat his wife every time he lost.

PIERRE:

That was to give him luck.

MARGUERITE:

And then, gamblers are always in debt. I'm sure you have debts?

PIERRE:

Who hasn't?

MARGUERITE:

If you have debts, then you have creditors; they're always at the door, and make scenes with you in the street. And they have no respect for women, either. How lovely it would be! (*She catches sight of the bill on the table.*) What is that?

PIERRE:

Nothing.

MARGUERITE:

It's a bill. See where your gambling has brought you! You're being threatened!

PIERRE:

That was a mistake.

MARGUERITE:

Who sent it? The landlord?

PIERRE:

It's not even from my landlord. It's from my tailor!

MARGUERITE:

(*Indignantly.*) Don't you pay your tailor?

PIERRE:

He doesn't deserve to have me pay him. Think of it, to threaten me, one of his best customers! He will *pay* me —and dearly!

MARGUERITE:

But you are in the wrong.

PIERRE:

He dresses me very poorly, too!

MARGUERITE:

I don't think so. You are very stylish.

PIERRE:

(*Modestly.*) Oh!

MARGUERITE:

I don't mean that you yourself are distinctly elegant, but you are well-dressed. I noticed that the very first thing.

PIERRE:

Thanks.

MARGUERITE:

That always makes a great deal of difference with me. Do you owe your tailor much?

PIERRE:

I don't remember exactly how much. (*Taking the bill.*) "Three thousand two hundred francs."

MARGUERITE:

That's an enormous bill.

PIERRE:

Plus the costs.

MARGUERITE:

And I suppose you owe a good deal to your bootmaker?

PIERRE:

I don't deny—

MARGUERITE:

And your haberdasher?

PIERRE:

Oh, yes!

MARGUERITE:

Your landlord and all the rest of them! They will all sue you. I'm going.

PIERRE:

Marguerite, please!

MARGUERITE:

That same cousi of mine—

PIERRE:

Oh, forget your cousin. I had a cousin, too.

MARGUERITE:

Was he a gambler?

PIERRE:

Worse than yours.

MARGUERITE:

Impossible.

PIERRE:

He spent every night at the club, and lost all his money. One day he met a woman and loved her, a woman like you; but *she* was indulgent toward human frailties; she forgave him; so sweetly did she do it, that he never felt the desire to begin his evil life again.

MARGUERITE:

(*Allowing Pierre to take her hand.*) And what did your cousin then do?

PIERRE:

He wanted to prove that he was worthy of her and he stopped gambling.

MARGUERITE:

Good.

PIERRE:

And after he had reformed in that one respect, he reformed in every other. He lived a regular life and paid his debts.

MARGUERITE:

Ah!

PIERRE:

His landlord.

MARGUERITE:

His bootmaker.

PIERRE:

His haberdasher.

MARGUERITE:

And his tailor?

PIERRE:

And his tailor—thanks to the influence of a good woman. He did everything she wanted him to do, merely at a look from her. (*He forces her to sit down, and then kneels to her.*)

MARGUERITE:

Was that really your cousin?

PIERRE:

A very close cousin, practically a brother. (*He kisses her hand. A short silence.*) If you want to be very good, do you know what you would do—if you wanted to reform me?

MARGUERITE:

What?

PIERRE:

Take off your hat and let me see your hair. I haven't yet seen it. And then you would take a tiny glass of port, and a biscuit.

MARGUERITE:

(*Taking off her hat.*) Very well. I'm very obliging, am I not?

PIERRE:

(*Brings a little table to her, and starts to get a carafe of port, and glasses.*) You are exquisite!

MARGUERITE:

Only one glass—and one biscuit. (*There is a discreet knock at the door.*) Someone's knocking!

PIERRE:

Don't be alarmed. I know who it is.

MARGUERITE:

Perhaps it's the bailiff?

PIERRE:

On the contrary! (*He opens the door. Clémence enters with the postman's book. She gives a letter to him, and says in an undertone:*

CLÉMENCE:

Here is the registered letter. Sign there.

PIERRE:

Good. (*To Marguerite.*) Will you pardon me a moment? I must sign for this letter. (*He goes to the table and signs. A moment later he gives the book to Clémence.*) Here Clémence, and don't forget to give something to the postman.

CLÉMENCE:

Very well, Monsieur. (*She goes out.*)

PIERRE:

Now, you will have a biscuit. (*He serves her.*)

MARGUERITE:

Read your letter, I'll serve myself.

PIERRE:

Will you allow me? (*He opens the letter, and says to Marguerite:*) It's from my uncle.

MARGUERITE:

(*Laughing.*) Who sends money to his naughty nephew?

PIERRE:

Right!

MARGUERITE:

To his nephew who had doubtless told him some ridiculous tale?

PIERRE:

And if I did—

MARGUERITE:

In order to gamble again? If he knew that, he would never have sent it.

PIERRE:

Marguerite, I'll be frank with you. Yes, I did intend to play with this five thousand francs tonight.

MARGUERITE:

How horrible!

PIERRE:

If you wish it, I'll not go.

MARGUERITE:

Now you are wise. That's a good point.

PIERRE:

(*Going to her and trying to kiss her.*) And here's another.

MARGUERITE:

(*Gently repulsing him.*) No, not yet.

PIERRE:

But—to encourage me in my new life?

MARGUERITE:

(*Rising.*) Are you really in earnest? Will you follow the straight and narrow?

PIERRE:

If you will come with me.

MARGUERITE:

I don't say No, but I must have some guarantee, some proof—

PIERRE:

Tell me what proofs. Guide me.

MARGUERITE:

First of all, you must make good use of this money.

PIERRE:

How?

MARGUERITE:

Pay your debts.

PIERRE:

I may as well tell you that five thousand francs will cover only a very small percentage of them.

MARGUERITE:

But if you don't begin, it will always be like that. Pay the creditors that are threatening you. Don't let the costs mount up.

PIERRE:

Pay my tailor? Never!

MARGUERITE:

And why not? Some time you will have to pay him. You might as well now, when you are able to.

PIERRE:

He'll be the last. He threatens me!

MARGUERITE:

All the more reason for getting rid of him. I don't care which one you pay first; I merely don't want you to squander this money. I want you to lead a regular life. That's the only condition on which I might some day—

PIERRE:

You are an angel. I'll obey you, and begin the new life this very evening.

MARGUERITE:

Splendid!

PIERRE:

But I'll not pay my tailor. My bootmaker, yes.

MARGUERITE:

How much do you owe him?

PIERRE:

Eighty francs.

MARGUERITE:

Ridiculous. You're incorrigible. I may as well go.

(*She rises, but Pierre makes her sit down again.*)

PIERRE:

Marguerite, my dear Marguerite, don't be cruel.

MARGUERITE:

I'm not cruel. You ask me to sacrifice everything, and when I ask you to make the most insignificant of sacrifices—

PIERRE:

But I owe that damned tailor three thousand france!

MARGUERITE:

What do I care for your tailor and your bootmaker? I am asking for a proof of esteem and love. If I asked you for that three thousand francs for myself, you'd give it to me at once!

PIERRE:

Certainly. I'd much prefer that.

MARGUERITE:

But when I implore you to put the money to good use, and try to do you a real service, you absolutely refuse. This is unworthy of you!

PIERRE:

I don't absolutely refuse, I'm just thinking, considering. It's a very delicate matter—to pay one's tailor, all at once! A deplorable precedent to establish!

MARGUERITE:

I suppose so. I know that you men consider your tailors as a race apart. They don't need money. They're the only people in the world who couldn't use it, and your social etiquette doesn't allow you to pay their bills.

PIERRE:

It's a custom that reaches far back into early historic times.

MARGUERITE:

Little you care about his wife and children! I once knew a little tailor, who had customers of your sort, who never paid him—said he was only a tailor, and so on. He begged the customers, supplicated them, explained that he had no money, and they all said just what you say. And that little tailor, who clothed so many people, hasn't enough money to buy himself a shirt!

PIERRE:

Mine is richer than I, and he has no children.

MARGUERITE:

Perhaps he has a wife?

PIERRE:

Yes, he is married—has been for three or four years. I've heard that his wife is very charming.

MARGUERITE:

A tailor's wife? Think of it!

PIERRE:

He's a very fortunate tailor to have you plead for him. You've persuaded me to pay him one of these days. I'll do it only on one condition.

MARGUERITE:

What is that?

PIERRE:

That you let me kiss you.

MARGUERITE:

Not today.

PIERRE:

When?

MARGUERITE:

When you pay your tailor. I insist.

PIERRE:

Just a tiny little kiss?

MARGUERITE:

When you have paid your tailor.

PIERRE:

But I will pay him—soon. Tomorrow. I promise.

MARGUERITE:

Why not today? At once? You have the cash.

PIERRE:

Would it please you?

MARGUERITE:

It would prove that I mean at least a little to you.

PIERRE:

And you will then let me kiss you?

MARGUERITE:

We'll see. But you must first pay your tailor.

PIERRE:

I'll send my servant with the money.

MARGUERITE:

That's it, and don't forget to ask for a receipt.

PIERRE:

I'm not afraid: he's an honest man. He's an awful bother, but he's honest.

MARGUERITE:

Call for your servant, and have it over with.

PIERRE:

(*Reflecting*). Suppose I send him a part-payment?

MARGUERITE:

No, you must send it all.

PIERRE:

You think that's better?

MARGUERITE:

Much.

PIERRE:

Very well. Am I not obedient?

MARGUERITE:

You're very nice.

PIERRE:

Where's an envelope? Here! (*He puts the money into the envelope.*) One, two, three, and then two hundred.—You fully realize, don't you, what a tremendous sacrifice I am making?

MARGUERITE:

But you will reap the benefit. Shall I ring?

PIERRE:

(*Ringing.*) There! Now for the address. (*Writing:*) "Monsieur Plantin." (*To Marguerite, laughing.*) His name's Plantin!

MARGUERITE:

(*Laughing.*) How funny! (*Clémence appears.*)

CLÉMENCE:

Yes, Monsieur?

PIERRE:

Has Jean returned yet?

CLÉMENCE:

Yes, Monsieur.

PIERRE:

Tell him to take this at once.

CLÉMENCE:

Immediately?

PIERRE:

Without losing a minute. And ask him to bring an answer. Go now.

CLÉMENCE:

Very well, Monsieur. (*She looks at the address, and goes out.*)

PIERRE:

(*Returning to Marguerite, who has risen, and taking her hands in his.*) I feel already that you are going to make a little saint of me.

MARGUERITE:

I am deeply gratified at what you have done.

PIERRE:

And my recompense—?

MARGUERITE:

Impossible.

PIERRE:

(*Laughing.*) I can't help laughing when I think how little my tailor suspects the real reason for my paying him!

MARGUERITE:

I shan't tell him, at any rate.

PIERRE:

(*Astonished.*) Do you know him?

MARGUERITE:

He is my husband.

PIERRE:

(*Dumbfounded.*) Your—?

MARGUERITE:

I am Madame Plantin.

PIERRE:

You?

MARGUERITE:

Yes. Believe me, I am deeply grateful.

PIERRE:

Admirably played! My compliments! Your trick was eminently successful.

MARGUERITE:

In what way did I trick you?

PIERRE:

Here is your hat, Madame. Convey my felicitations to Monsieur Plantin.

MARGUERITE:

I think I *had* better go. (*She puts on her hat.*)

PIERRE:

This is a pretty situation! Take advantage of a man, make him fall in love with you! Delightful!

MARGUERITE:

Do you think me capable of behaving that way simply for the sake of a few thousand miserable francs?

PIERRE:

What other reason had you?

MARGUERITE:

How little you know of the heart of woman!

PIERRE:

Thank God!

MARGUERITE:

It was only after you had told me your name that I thought it amusing. It *was* amusing, wasn't it?

PIERRE:

No!

MARGUERITE:

I was vastly amused. It was only after that that it occurred to me to profit by the occasion and make you pay your debts. This one was causing you a great deal of trouble, and the costs—!

PIERRE:

Very good of you, indeed!

MARGUERITE:

I think I behaved as a good friend would. And now instead of being grateful, you practically insult me.

PIERRE:

If I have insulted you, I beg your pardon.

MARGUERITE:

And who knows but that my interest in you may, little by little—?

PIERRE:

You're not going to make me believe that you love me?

MARGUERITE:

No, I don't love you; I haven't the right to love you. A woman with any delicacy could never love a man who owed her husband money.

PIERRE:

(*Going toward her.*) But *now* I don't owe him money.

MARGUERITE:

I shall remember you with great pleasure, and when I am bored—which I often am—I shall—think of our little adventure!

PIERRE:

Will you ever return?

MARGUERITE:

You never can tell—!

CURTAIN

THE DIRECTORS' MEETING

By J. L. Morgan

IT was eight o'clock in the evening and the club was under full steam. Now, the clubs one sees from a three dollar orchestra seat or reads of in the best Indiana literature at $1.35 net, depict scenes of quiet and sumptuous elegance. But not so the —— Club—or at least there was no similarity on this particular night, which happened to be Saturday night, directors' meeting night, and a cold, raw night with a screeching wind and a fall of snow. There may have been other psychological factors that influenced the occasion, but let us not go too deeply into such matters. Suffice it to say that on a cold Saturday night a warm club is peculiarly attractive to the more or less tired business man after a more or less toilsome week.

To iterate, the scene was not one of quietude. Indeed, one might by closing one's eyes imagine that one was standing on the gun deck of a battleship going into action. Telephones jangled, buzzers grunted, slim youths in green livery and brass buttons dashed hither and yon, and the call bells in the grillroom clanged their wild alarum.

Behind the desk Tucker, the night clerk, was working under forced draft. What with three speaking tubes, a couple of house 'phones, an outside 'phone, the key rack, the money drawer, and the command of a half dozen bellhops, he was as occupied as the vaudeville performer who spins a couple of plates on the end of billiard cues resting on his chin, and at the same time juggles a silk hat, a lighted cigar, an umbrella and a rocking chair.

It was about this time that Mr. Abner B. McNabb (notes and mortgages), appeared in front of the desk. He had a way of coming into visibility at odd times, from nowhere in particular, being materialized apparently from the spirit (Scotch), and fading slowly away again as though controlled by a master medium.

Mr. McNabb lived at the club, and from the first day of his residence there, which antedated the recollection of the oldest employee, he was known among the help as "Mr. McNutt." Always of peculiar temperament, Mr. McNabb, now at something over seventy, was—to put it mildly—"eccentric." He was wealthy and a money-maker, and even now he could spot a dollar far beyond the vision of most younger men. This was an astounding fact, considering the fog of queer beliefs, violent and unheard of prejudices, and Scotch whiskey in which he was at all times enveloped.

As a conversationalist he could not by any stretch of the imagination be called brilliant. A lawyer would say that he was highly incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial. He drooled and mumbled, save on financial topics, and, to use the picturesque language of Jimmie Ryan, bell-hop, "talked so no one could understand what in hell he was driving at."

With a speaking tube at one ear and a telephone receiver at the other, Tucker looked up wearily.

"Yes, sir, Mr. McNu—Mr. McNabb" he said, "I'll give it to the house committee."

Every evening at about this hour McNabb handed in a complaint ad-

dressed to the house committee. He was very punctual about it. So Tucker took the smeary letter and tossed it over on the desk, where there was a pile of a dozen others by the same author.

Tucker scowled at the grinning bookkeeper. "That old devil is going to drive me crazy."

"Then you'll be just like a regular member," observed the bookkeeper pleasantly. "They're all crazy."

"That's right. But old McNutt is a star at it. He ought to be in a padded cell. Last week he wrote to the directors and asked that the members be supplied with fish-horns to call the bellhops. He said they paid no 'tention to bells and—"

Tucker stopped suddenly for Mr. McNabb had materialized again and was leaning against the desk almost at Tucker's elbow.

The old man was laboriously writing on a pad of blanks and, after smudging the result of his endeavor with an envelope, which he mistook for a blotter, he handed the pad to the flustered Tucker and said: "Fifty!"

The clerk unlocked the money drawer and taking out a bale of currency, rapidly counted out fifty dollars, hoping the while that his remark had not been overheard.

McNabb, with a swoop of his yellow fingers, pouched the money and disappeared — vanishing, apparently, into thin air—leaving Tucker staring in dismay at the slip of paper in his hand.

"Suffering polecats!" he exclaimed. "The old hound wrote out a check on a blank receipt!"

He beat the desk bell viciously and dispatched the boys who responded in hot pursuit. But McNabb was gone.

From the grillroom came the preliminary strains of an impromptu quartet, trying its wings, as it were, on the chorus of "The Old Oaken Bucket." At the end of this offering the quartet applauded itself with great enthusiasm and then voices raised themselves in eager suggestion, foretelling the attempt of a more intricate number.

The ceiling overhead shook and threatened to drop at any moment as the pool-players upstairs thundered on the floor with their cues and loudly shouted to "Rack 'em up, rack 'em up!"

The telephone booths were all occupied and several impatient men were waiting. The gists of the communications that burdened the wires were practically the same—the horrific climatic conditions downtown—conditions dangerous in the extreme and which prevented loving husbands getting home to fireside and dinner. Through the door of one booth the plaintive voice of one Jim Webster (real estate & insurance) could be heard:

"But listen, dearie, the cars are all stopped—snow's three feet deep on the tracks . . . Can't get a taxi, been tryin' for an hour. . . You say that there's only a couple of inches of snow and that the cars are running out there? Well, that only goes to show you how you can't ever tell 'bout weather conditions. Funny ain't it? . . . You say it ain't funny? Well, I guess you're right. It's pretty gloomy down here in this old club. . . You know, dearie, I'd a lot rather be home with you. But how am I goin' to get there?—Answer me that. . . Now listen, dearie, don't be silly. I'll come out just as soon as I can get a taxi—it might be an hour and it might be several hours, cause there's a big demand for them tonight. . . All right, dearie, I'll hurry."

Mr. Webster hung up the receiver and backed out of the booth. Then he executed a few sprightly steps reminiscent of the art of Salomé and hurried into the grill, whence came the rich rye baritone of Mr. Sam Hooper (stocks & bonds) and others in the throes of "Sweet Angeline."

In the grill Mr. Webster's welcome was vociferous. "Sweet Angeline" was abandoned, cast aside, ditched instanter; and there was a vast pounding on the bell in the center of the table and cries of "Look who's here!" and "Wassail! Wassail!"

But to this outburst Mr. Webster paid no heed. He encircled the table, one-stepping, rocking his shoulders, and to the rhythm of his snapping fingers he chanted: "Got it fixed! Got it fixed! Don't have to go home!"

In notorious room 78, Phil Martin, (steel) had already organized the Saturday night poker game and the table was full.

You are familiar with the conventional club poker-game as pictured in the magazines—a number of immaculate gentlemen in evening dress seated about a table, with a liveried, mutton-chop butler in the middle distance holding a wine-cooler. Was this the picture in room 78? Not on your life! There were eight coatless men about the table, four of them losers and breathing hard. Their sleeves were rolled up and they were stripped for action. The two big winners were in high good-humor, full of merry quips, jokes and anecdotes; the two biggest losers were glum and demanding savagely: "Whatcha got? whatcha got?"

And there were the silent ones at the table. Notably Art Henderson (leather), who sat motionless, like a buzzard on a dead limb waiting for something to die. At intervals of a half hour Henderson would move in his chips, whereupon the others would throw their hands into the discard as though the cards were afire. For when Henderson bet he had 'em. He was as patient as an Eskimo and as unfeeling as a scavenger.

But it was not all beer and skittles at the club, for the directors were in session and each of them had something to "put over."

The vice-president, Mr. August P. Dumbeck (wholesale drugs), after three ineffectual attempts, finally replevined Mr. Sam Hooper from the grill and the meeting was called to order.

Mr. Hooper entered the room in an evil, not to say dangerous, humor. He was nursing a deep sense of injury. For down in the grill he had, due largely to the adroit flattery of Mr. Webster, become infatuated with his own voice and had sung his entire repertoire of song hits, including such new ones as "Sweet Little Buttercup," "Larboard Watch Ahoy," and "The Spanish Cavalier," only to awake to the fact that he was making a fool of himself when Mr. Webster kicked him (by mistake) on the shin under the table and gravely requested him to render the first act of "Parsifal."

Mr. Dumbeck rapped on the table with a lead pencil in lieu of a gavel.

"The secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting," he said.

Whereupon a serious young man behind a huge pair of horn spectacles began, in a rich throaty voice which suggested adenoids, a recital of the transactions of the prior meeting to which no one paid the slightest attention.

The minutes were duly approved and Mr. Dumbeck said:

"We will now hear communications to the Board, if any."

The solemn young man opened the first of a pile of letters before him and began:

"I have been a member of this club over thirty years and —"

"To hell with that thirty year business," interrupted Mr. Hooper, who besides being in bad humor was slightly under the influence. " 'At letter's from old McNabb. All I want to know is what's eating him now."

Mr. Dumbeck frowned. He had slight tolerance for Hooper, whom he regarded as a total loss to Demon Rum, and he took small pains to conceal it.

"You are out of order, Mr. Hooper," he said, rapping the table with his pencil.

Mr. Hooper subsided slowly—mumbling to himself like a train in the distance.

"—and," resumed the secretary *(reading the letter) "I want to call the attention of the Directors to the infernal hole that masquerades as the barbershop. Today I was shaved with a dull potato-knife. The barber eats onions and asafoetida and—"*

"I move the communication be tabled," put in "Doc" Clark.

The motion was carried without dissent.

The secretary opened another letter. *"I have been a member of this club over thirty years—"*

"Cut out that thirty year stuff," interrupted Mr. Hooper again.

The secretary scanned the letter rapidly.

"This time," he said, "Mr. McNabb's grievance is that the bar closes at midnight. He wants an all-night service."

There were a number of other communications from the same writer—all of which were consigned to the waste basket without further ceremony.

There was a letter from an ambitious young architect outlining a visionary scheme of building a new million dollar clubhouse. (A new home for the club had been under discussion for many years, but all attempts at its financing had failed.) There was a score of duns from tradesmen (for, like many clubs, the —— was only a couple of jumps in front of the bailiff); and there was a protest from a prohibition society regarding the sale of liquor in the club, which moved Mr. Hooper to some heated remarks.

"Next in order of business," said the chairman, "will be the reports of committees."

The committees were like all club committees, which is to say that they had done nothing and as a consequence had nothing to report. The chairman of the finance committee, Mr. Arthur J. Austin (dry goods), however, concealed his delinquency by reading a list of the posted members, with comments:

"There's A. C. Johnson—has owed us sixty-eight dollars for three months, and last week he buys a new automobile. . . . A. G. Fogg, forty-two dollars and eighty-five cents—and I heard him yesterday talking about taking a trip to Honolulu. . . . J. Worthington Higgs—a total loss of over ninety simoleons. He ought to be in jail . . . . C. J. Fosdick—fifty-four dollars to the bad, and we'll never get it unless we sue. The old crook never pays anybody. (Here he skipped his own name). . . . A. Addison Monroe—a four-flush that's into us for over a hundred and has left for parts unknown and—"

Three of the directors yawned loudly, indicating thereby that they cared nothing for Mr. Austin's views, so he sat down in a huff.

"We now come," said Mr. Dumbeck, "to the election of new members." The directors and the membership committee were in this instance one and the same.

He consulted a slip of paper on which were written three names. They were as follows:

Mr. Iver B. McIntosh, *Secretary the Colonial Land Co.*

Col. Walter H. Wapples, *Investments.*

Dr. Erasmus J. Hoskins, *President Hoskins Medical Co., Ltd.*

The first applicant, Mr. McIntosh, went through like a bullet from a machine gun. There was everything to recommend him: He was a stranger; he had been proposed by a member who was almost a stranger; and he was Scotch.

The Scotchman disposed of, the directors began to buzz among themselves and it was evident that there was hard sledding ahead for the other two applicants.

"The next name," said the chairman, "is that of Col. Walter H. Wapples. If the committee on membership has anything to say we will be pleased to hear it."

Judge Hawper rose majestically. He was physically a big man and was a legal howitzer of the heaviest calibre.

"Mr. Vice-president," he began, "as chairman of the membership committee it gives me the greatest of pleasure to recommend the election as a member of this club a man whose name is so intimately associated with the commercial and financial welfare of this community. . . . I refer to the honorable Col. Walter H. Wapples."

He paused, looked around, drew

from his pocket a handkerchief, applied it to his nose and then slowly descended into his chair.

Mr. Sam Hooper now spoke:

"It says after Wapples's name 'Investments.' What kind of investments? —oil stock, ain't it? Got rich sellin' worthless stock to widows and orphans, didn't he? I believe in keeping such grafters out."

Instantly there was confusion. Several members clamored for recognition from the chairman. Above them all could be heard the booming voice of Judge Hawper who had already begun a verbal broadside at Mr. Hooper, who did not lack defenders.

After great exertion Mr. Dumbeck restored order.

"Gentlemen," he said, "it would seem that Col. Wapples's name can not be acted favorably upon at this time. Therefore I suggest that before we go further in the matter we consider the application of Dr. Hoskins."

He raised his hand to hold attention, for with the name of Hoskins loud whisperings came from several quarters of the room.

"If I may speak from the chair," continued Dumbeck, nervously moistening his lips, "I would like to say that Dr. Hoskins would make a splendid addition to the membership of this club. He is president of one of the largest corporations of this city—one that does a business of several millions of dollars a year. I trust there will be no objections."

"Doc" Clark leaped to his feet. Clark was an ex-president of the state medical association and he had, for obvious reasons, a violent hatred for the manufacturers of proprietary remedies.

"This fellow is a patent medicine faker" he shouted. "A skin and a fraud! If the directors will look out of the window they will see across the street a billboard with Hoskins's ugly face on it, and underneath they will read:

'TAKE GOOD OLD DR. HOSKINS'S LIQUID LAXATIVE FOR LACERATED LIVERS.

'Nature's remedy, made of soothing herbs, roots, balms and balsams.'

"Is that the kind of a man we want in this club, I ask you? His admission here would be an affront to the medical profession of this town—and if he comes in I for one will go out."

And with this threat the doctor sat down violently.

Now Mr. Edward H. Dobson, of the First National, rose to speak.

Mr. Dobson was a warm partisan of the candidacy of Dr. Hoskins, and, as the advertisements say, "there's a reason." The funds of the Hoskins Medical Co. were in Dobson's bank, and the president of the medical company had recently hinted that an unfavorable action by the directors of the —— Club in a certain matter would probably necessitate a change in banking arrangements. So with this fact uppermost in his mind Mr. Dobson cleared his throat and entered the forum:

"I would like to say that I have a high regard for Dr. Hoskins," he said. "I have found him eminently fair in all his dealings—"

"With your bank," interrupted Clark.

"Yes," admitted Dobson, "with the bank of which I am an officer, and—"

"Let me tell what I know about this party," broke in Mr. Hooper, again rising to his feet. "This here fellow Hoskins has got a brother-in-law on the board of the Brookside Country Club, and I got it straight that he was the one that black-balled a certain friend of mine, the best fellow you ever saw, and as for Hoskins getting into this club I'll see him in hell first! And—"

"Sit down!" shouted Mr. Dumbeck. "You are out of order!"

He pounded the table and after a time succeeded in quieting the exchange of personalities that were being hurled back and forth between various directors.

"Now, gentlemen," he began, "let us be reasonable—let us lay our angry passions aside and look into this matter with our minds free from narrow prejudices."

Here Mr. Dumbeck put a smile on his face that had no foundation in fact. It was as artificial as embalmer's rouge. "The proprietary medicine business is one of the great industries of this country. It gives employment to thousands—"

"And swindles millions," put in Clark.

Mr. Dumbeck glared at Dr. Clark, a look which the doctor returned with interest.

Here Mr. Sam Hooper once more unlimbered for action.

"There's a nigger in the wood-pile here somewhere, Dumbeck," he said, rising to his feet and pointing a long finger in that worthy's face. "And so let's see if we can't get him uncovered. Now, ain't it a fact that this here faker, Hoskins, buys all the ingredients for his liver mixture from you? Ain't it a fact, I ask you?"

Mr. Dumbeck's face crimsoned.

"What of it? What difference does that make?" he demanded angrily. "The fact that our house sells some stuff to the Hoskins Medical Co. makes no difference one way or another. We sell lots of concerns and—"

"Ah, ha!" interrupted Mr. Hooper, triumphantly. "Now we are getting down into the bowels of this matter! Now I'm going to ask you," and here Mr. Hooper's manner was that of the district attorney in the great trial scene in Reel III,—"I'm going to ask you if Hoskins hasn't told you that if he don't get into this club he's going to place his business somewhere else?"

Just what Mr. Dumbeck's answer would have been cannot be told, for at this moment the door opened and a man stepped into the room. It was Mr. Abner B. McNabb and he was excessively drunk.

"I been a member of this club over thirty years," he began, "and it's outrage way certain members sit 'round downstairs and snore in their chairs. A gentl'man can't take quiet nap—'s outrage, I say, outrage. And 'nother thing—"

Mr. Dumbeck, at first welcoming the intrusion, now shifted uneasily in his seat. Of the two evils, he preferred Hooper.

"Mr. McNabb," he said, "I will have to ask you to withdraw. The Board is in executive session on the election of new members and—"

"'Swhat I know. I got two of 'em downstairs in the grill waitin' to be notified."

"Two of whom, and waiting to be notified of what?" inquired the dazed Mr. Dumbeck.

"Two new members—or goin' to be new members," returned Mr. McNabb. "Good ole Doc Hoskins and old Walt Wapples are waitin' to buy you gentlemen a drink—jus' as soon as they're elected. So hurry up."

"But there is serious objection—"

"There ishn't goin' to be no objection. Listen to me, you fellows: Thish club's in bad shape—fact is itsh been on verge of blowin' up for past twenty years. Now Hoskins has made 'bout a million a year for pasht five years in liver business; and Wapples has done almosht as well sellin' oil stock. So I got these two gentl'men together tonight—and they're goin' to build a new club for us. They're goin' to underwrite the whole proposhition, and it's goin' to cosht 'em over a quarter of a million. Now get busy!"

. . . . . .

A quarter of an hour later the directors were seated about a large table in the grillroom happily discussing with Dr. Hoskins and Col. Walter H. Wapples whether it would be best to put the swimming pool on the tenth floor of the new building, or in the basement.

LOVE OF DEATH

By Newton A. Fuessle

I

SNELL fingered the telephone receiver with attentive indifference. Then he quietly said "No," and hung it up. He had listened to an invitation to one of those affairs that would have bored him insufferably.

At twenty-five, he would have gone for the absurd sake of politeness. Today, at thirty-five, he has acquired the safeguarding habit of self-defense that dwells in an appropriate negative.

He crossed the exquisitely carpeted floor of his private office, and gazed reflectively at isolated flakes of snow descending daintily through the November dusk.

He drew close to the cool windowpane, and permitted the glow of a subtly delicious sensation to pervade his being.

It was that delightful sense of dizziness which had always come over him when looking down from a great height. He loved it.

Opening the window, he drew deep, deliberate breaths of the frosty air. He gazed at the flitting snow-flakes, vivid spots against the tawny background of the building across the street. His spirit went out to them, lured by the mesmerism of their cradled motions in the air.

From eighteen stories below came the roar of Manhattan, borne dynamically aloft. Snell hardly heard it—so intent and a-tingle were his senses, fed by deep-drawn breaths of the air that cradled the flickering snow-flakes.

Now, for the thousandth time, recurred that sensuous yearning to fall from a great height, to be wondrously cradled, even if but an intoxicating moment, by billows of air.

Again and again the idea had taken hold of him. The romance of height! All the poetry in him converged with pagan yearning upon the conception. The torment to feel and know the inscrutable secret of this caress of space saturated the solution of his being.

And then the pressure of the mood was broken by the announcement of an important caller.

II

SNELL would not have called himself morbid. He loved life with a singular eagerness. But always with a fastidious and selective discrimination that left him cold before the beckoning of the commonplace—whether in business, in women, in thought, or in art. He shrank from the obvious as a nail shrinks from the hammer.

Snell began to think when other boys of his age were still learning to talk. And at thirty, when most of us begin to think, thinking bored him.

At the age of six, the flood of beauty from a sunset charmed him for hours after its last tinge had vanished.

At seven, the remote beauty of certain women five times his age disconcerted his young soul like the wrench of a magnetic current.

At eight, the melancholy of October flowed through his veins; and the perfume of decadence made him strangely wistful.

At nine, the pungent romance of cigarettes, and the narcotic languor of a wisp of smoke seen drifting through the air, began to intrigue his fancy.

In the twelfth year of his curious life, he made the acquaintance of the pensive optimism of Robert Louis Stevenson, and the pleasant pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer. He read Guy de Maupassant in church, and Anatole France during "study hours" at high school.

His teachers regarded him as a hopeless blend of indifference and stupidity. They were right. He was utterly indifferent to the hard-boiled educational dogma dished up by banal pedagogues. He was stupid and thick of wit when required to stand up and recite facts assembled and set down by minds emotionally so remote from his that they had not a single reaction in common.

Hedged in by sermons, and school, and all that was commonplace, this boy was kept constantly and painfully athirst. Yet he had managed to sip life in stolen moments. All without remorse. With never a trace of feeling that possibly he was wrong, and that the church-going, lodge-joining, mashed potato point of view might be right.

He differed from his surroundings as Nile green differs from battleship grey.

III

The gush of evening crowds had already poured out of the office building when Snell closed his desk and rang for the elevator. He was very tired. Two hours of combat with his caller over an involved merchandizing problem had drained nine-tenths of his vitality.

He crossed the threshhold of the pausing elevator, and was borne down on its billow of electricity, held sharply in control by the operator. Again there glided into his nerves that hunger to fall. Again he thought enviously of the fluttering, cradled descent of the snowflakes.

Their cool caresses met him when he emerged from the building. They swept in stealthy flurries against his hot face, as though trying to communicate some elusive message to him—to convey some subtle secret clasped in their frozen little bodies—only to melt, mute and tantalizing against his cheek.

Snell crossed the sidewalk with heavy footsteps and entered his open car which stood at the curb. He sank wearily against the cushions, as the big car moved on into the stream of traffic without a sluggish strain in its heavy body.

He was strangely hot. His body was in a glow. He took several deep breaths of the frosty air. A sudden chill surged through him.

"I must be sick," he thought.

He watched the glimmering city without interest. His thoughts traveled back to his first impressions of New York. To the poignant pictures the city had tooled upon the sensitive plates of his mind.

Out of the blur and litter of memories of his early days in New York, vivid pictures came back to him. The drizzle of rain beating the glazed streets on nights when he wandered meekly, hungry for food and warmth. The dilapidated room where the paganism of Gauthier first caught him in its beam through the pages of "Mlle. de Maupin." The chance manœuvre that finally struck him sharply into the layout of ambitious business. The superb animalism of some of the women who had gravitated within his reach. That of the many who remained remote, withheld from him by the austerity of circumstance.

A bitter blast sawed through Fifth Avenue. Snell, his teeth chattering, called to his chauffeur to stop at Sherry's.

"Come back for me at nine o'clock," he added. "Bring the closed car."

Snell maintained a suite of rooms at Sherry's. But tonight he decided to eat his dinner in the public dining-room. He was running more temperature than he fancied. He nibbled at various foods without appetite. Once he felt a stab of pain in his chest. Pneumococci were at work. But he did not know it.

In the glare of light on the street, he kept seeing the cradled flicker of the snowflakes. A taunting freedom in

their movement seemed to laugh at the earth-bound, meaty creatures who were dining within. Snell cast his eyes about the dining-room with a contempt for life. The glitter of jewels on fat, unlovely women filled him almost with nausea. Even in the examples of young, fresh beauty that gleamed about him, he saw nothing but futility. The ardor of conversation that drifted to his ears sounded silly. Passion looked ludicrous. The struggle to get and to hold looked ludicrous. Life looked ludicrous.

He drank glass after glass of icy water. He had long since lost his primitive taste for wine. He wanted nothing, thirsted for nothing, longed for nothing, but that intoxicating plunge into thrilling space on which his fancy had so often dwelt. He had stood at the edge of great cliffs, on the tops of dizzy skyscrapers, at lofty windows. He had sat in aeroplanes ten thousand feet above earth. And always with that delicious yearning to fall, that avid longing to be cradled, even if for but a fleeting moment, in wondrous billows of air.

Again a stab of pain shot through his chest. His head rang. His blood beat. A chill ran through his body. Space called. A mighty command rang through him like a rich, sonorous knell. He was as eager as a bridegroom for the clasp of death—that velvet clasp of space that dwelt in billows of air. At this moment, he loved even the thought of crashing into the flint of the pavement, if only the crash might come after that velvet clasp of space.

He crossed the room in a daze of weakness. The head-waiter, struck by the pallor of his well-known patron, hurried after him. But before he could reach Snell's side, the latter had collapsed.

IV

In another fifteen minutes, the Snell suite on the top floor was a scene of quiet activity.

Snell lay in his great Empire bed, breathing hard. He was unconscious. Two nurses were energetically surrounding his lungs with an ice-pack. He had been tapped and stethoscoped. The verdict of the two grave-eyed doctors was pneumonia.

The wires buzzed. Snell's secretary was routed out of the theater. The chairman of his board of directors was called in. His Chicago office was notified. A telegram was sent to his divorced wife at Hot Springs. The doctors shook their heads and hoped for the best. The nurses worked dynamically and feared for the worst.

On the third day of his collapse, Snell opened his eyes, and knew by the leaden stupor that gripped him, by the hideous taste of death in his mouth, that the end was near. He closed his eyes, and strove dully to think. He remembered a similar anguish in his lungs as a youth, running cross-country, helplessly and hopelessly outclassed by a fleet field, but battling insanely for place.

And now a slow, heavy wave of disappointment rolled through him. It was a poignant feeling of guilt, a crushing sense of a duty left unperformed, a great duty to himself—the duty of casting himself into space. The thought of meeting death on the soft ease of his Empire bed shamed him acutely.

He began to babble petulantly. The nurse glided to his bedside with a hypodermic. He felt the jet of morphine to his feet, and sank into troubled silence.

The next time the dying man opened his eyes, he heard and felt a clear call, startling him like the tap of a silver bell out of the stupor that had clasped him. It was the call of space.

Out of half-closed eyes, he watched the dim figure of the nurse with reflective cunning. He heard voices vaguely, but made no effort to distinguish words. One single idea held and dominated him. He moved his toes and knees, and found strength there. He measured the distance to the casement with feverish eye. He calculated the time it would take to drag himself to the open window. The figures of people in the

room angered him. The luminous window beckoned to him like a merciful pool of Bethesda balanced on its side. He ached to be alone.

At last his moment came. The dim figures vanished. Their voices faded into silence. Stealthily he laid back the covers of his bed. With gritted teeth he ignored the furnace of pain in his lungs, crept out of his bed, and dragged himself toward the lustrous window. The call of space beat through him like the blare of a bugle. The muscles of earth called gravity seemed to enter the window like great arms and draw him nearer and nearer the casement.

He drew himself cautiously up. For a moment he clung poised upon this cold, tonic threshold of space. A gust of fierce joy swept through him. He plunged passionately forward. And he knew at last the incomparable feeling of being cradled like the snowflakes on billows of air.

He caught a swift glimpse of the black street shooting upward to collide with him. And even that was magnificent. What in life could compare with this incredible intoxication of death?

V

THE nurse and two doctors turned from Snell's bedside.

"Did you notice that smile that flickered to his face when I gave him that last hypodermic?" said the nurse. "He must have died happy. I wonder what he could have been thinking about."

LA COQUETTERIE ORDINAIRE

By John Hamilton

I

I SMILED. . . . .
I waited for her at the fountain for two hours.

II

We smiled. . . . .
I waited for her at the fountain for an hour.

III

She smiled. . . . .
She waited for me at the fountain. . . . .

IT is easy for a man to be popular with women, if he have no regard for the truth.

ARISTOCRACY

By Evelyn Campbell

I

DEALAND met Joan Whyte when they were both at the Stevensons' for a week end, but being clever young people they managed to prevent their friends from discovering that they had fallen hopelessly in love in less than forty-eight hours.

Joan was a trained young person who concealed eagerness beneath a studied pose but she was primitive enough to answer Dealand's unspoken confession with one of her own, and without shame. She was one of those rare creatures endowed with thin ankles, a flawless neck, properly set ears and enough width between her eyes to prove that she was not a liar.

Dealand, who had always been too busy to fall in love, forgot his trite opinions and swore to himself that he would marry her even if the aristocratic Whytes rose from their graves *en masse* to prevent it. He knew at once that he had his work cut out to win her from the claws of her impecunious family, for as a whole they were somewhat seedy, a little down at the heel though socially well-pressed still. Joan was their last good bit of convertible collateral and a blind man would know that they would fight for her.

On the other hand, Dealand was not the match for her. Joan, wise child, knew that without being told, but she was determined, in a delicate way, to have him. She fell in love with him because he represented all the things of which she had been deprived by a systematic mother: rare meat, unexpurgated French, chocolate creams after midnight and pretty lingerie. She was not innocent, for there is no more innocence. She was merely isolated; permitted, as it were, to look at life through a peep hole, keeping her skirts snug about her ankles the while. The virility of Dealand appealed to her the more strongly in that the rarefied atmosphere of her seclusion was becoming tempered by frequent glimpses of society other than the Whytes' austere circle. For Mama Whyte was a clever marriage manipulator and well knew that the fat worm she desired for her birdling was not to be found among the thin-blooded aristocrats of her preference. So she permitted the calamitous week-end that resulted in the meeting of Dealand and Joan.

After that there set in dark days for all, leavened for the lovers by an occasional meeting countenanced by a complaisant friend.

Dealand was both angry and bewildered by the refusal of Joan's family to consider him. He had money—not very much it is true—but he could make more. He could not possibly have understood that this in itself was a very black mark against him. Nobody knew who he was! Possession of the customary father and mother altered nothing in the eyes of the Whytes. They patiently explained to their daughter that nobody had known this traditional father and mother, consequently—

The young pair were reduced to rare encounters resulting from careful engineering, and while Joan's sentimentality might have been content with this subterfuge for a time, her lover, a product of the strenuous age, was quickly irked

of the restraint, and for him romance became confused with humiliation. He even watched Joan herself secretly, to find if in any degree she shared the contemptuous attitude of her family. But she was innocently adoring.

If the Whytes had behaved considerately he would have waited a year or two or until his finances were upon a more substantial basis. They assumed the outrageous attitude that he was a million miles beneath Joan, so he was on fire to marry her at once and defy them.

He proposed this to Joan when he went down to Welland to see her while she stayed a week with her married sister at Pointing Rock.

They were on the hillside above the town where they could pretend to have met accidentally. Joan had gone for a walk, carrying a bewildering white parasol and it was behind this screen that they kissed each other sweetly and tremulously as one timidly investigates some tremendous, leashed power to which closer contact might mean destruction. They were safe from all observant eyes in this secluded spot, but they were not safe from each other.

"I must tell you first, dear," said Joan falteringly, "that mother has forbidden me seeing you at all."

"Then we will be married at once," announced Dealand with finality, "I'm glad the thing has come to an end. I'll take you back with me tonight."

"Oh, Hal!"

The plan leaped full-fledged to his mind. He could not continue to follow even Joan Whyte about the country on sufferance. Each time they planned to meet for a few stolen hours the experience left him raw for days to come.

"You see, Joan," he hurried, "I'm making plenty of money now. I can keep things going nicely and it's getting better all the time. In a few years we'll have a place of our own and a good car. Oh, I've thought it all out. I'm going to climb, my little girl, and I'll take you along with me. Give me a few years and even your family will be satisfied. Think of the time I spend waiting about for these chance meetings when just as easily we could be together. And Joan! My time is where it means money."

He waited expectantly as though for her thrilling praise, but Joan was looking far away across the valley and her eyes were deep with mystery while the little pulse in her throat beat like a frightened heart. Joan was thinking of marriage, not as she had thought of it before but as an intimate thing of the next hour. She heard little of what he said; the words were merely a meaningless jumble wrapped around the immense significance of that which they explained.

She was exalted, borne away by the irresistible demand of his pleading. She could not refuse because she adored him, but she wanted to weep because the thought of marriage was so overwhelmingly like a suddenly confronted abyss. To ease the smother in her breast she murmured her excuse for yielding.

"Mother — mother — wants me to marry some one else. She will never—forgive me, dear—consent to you—our marriage."

But Dealand only laughed at that, though there was a corroding bitterness behind his laughter. The sting to his pride bit down through his love and colored even the joy of winning Joan. Why would they not accept him? What was the vague, intangible thing that separated him from Joan's people, which was like the walls of Rome and yet invisible.

Joan held closely to her lover's hand as they went down the hill. She loved him ten thousand times more, if that were possible, than when they had climbed it together. Her heart seemed bursting with love. Dealand, who had once been a disreputable, apple-stealing little boy, walked beside her like a conquering god. And he had conquered everything. He was tall and handsome. He had made the world accept him, and now he was to marry a Whyte.

They parted secretively, for the first time avoiding Welland eyes but it was

the first time they had anything to conceal.

Dealand planned simply and efficiently. He would come for her at a discreet rendezvous in a hired motor car late that night and they would drive across Pointing Mountain to Annisdale, where someone could be found to marry them before the early morning train. Nothing could be more simple, more easily carried out than such an arrangement. Also it seemed that nothing could prevent Joan Whyte from playing high stakes with her life.

But sometimes it pleases Providence to conserve a thing as fine and good as she. It was so nearly too late that even Providence must have been sorely put to it to find an instrument ready to the hand. . . .

II

In direct contradiction of his rather forceful personality, Deland was somewhat of a dandy. He always wore clothes which were just a fraction too good and were created by a tailor who could not dissemble their newness. On this occasion he happened to wear an odd new make of shoe, beautiful and lustrous russet, narrow, ultra-modern and expensive. After walking interminably about the miserable streets of Welland in search of properties for the planned elopement of the night, these shoes begun to hurt fearfully.

He swore at them feebly until some kind soul volunteered to lead him to the town cobbler.

The shop was the last on the village street. Beyond it were blissfully vacant lots of waving green grass and indifferent houses set clannishly in among deep trees. The old shoemaker sat in his sunny doorway sewing a child's shoe. He was much too old. Just as his shop was littered with odds and ends which nobody owned or wanted, so was this ancient person made up of the debris of four-fifths of a century. One would have imagined that in this great time he must have accumulated some measure of sweetness from mere living, but far from that he seemed to give out in infinitesimal fragments the sordid hoardings from infinite hours of bitter self communion. Once he may have been of some forbidden ancestry; now he was only the shoemaker.

He stopped sewing for a moment and looked up at Dealand with little red, winking eyes, then hid his malevolent glance beneath shriveled lids.

"Your foot iss too proad, haffing no shoes ven you vass a leetle poy," he said.

Though he was a successful man and in love, Dealand was merely human and wanted his shoe stretched. He resented the old cobbler's impertinence but contented himself with flinging the offending brown monstrosity into the maw of re-making.

The shoemaker looked bitterly at the ultra-modern, narrow, fashionable thing in his hand. He jabbed at it savagely with one of his torturous instruments while his customer concealed his chagrin.

The shop was small and there was no place to sit while the shoe was being repaired. Dealand was obliged to stand like a crane upon one leg to prevent his stockinged foot from touching the contamination of the floor. He burned with annoyance. He imagined that the entire town was gazing at him through the open door while he stood in this ridiculous attitude. It failed to relieve him that in truth there was no witness to his discomfiture but the shoemaker's grandchild who sat placidly on the floor, licking a freshly blacked boot. He was a small, incredibly dirty youngster, pursuing with a magnificent philosophy, which a king might have envied, the process of extracting sweetness from a forbidding and unpromising source. Now and then he lifted dull blue eyes to Dealand and appraised him gravely, sensing his disapproval.

The sight of this annoyed him beyond reason. He could not appreciate the enjoyment with which the child consumed the blacking; he could only consider the fact that it was blacking.

With the sensation of performing a revolting task he inserted his cane between the child's lips and the boot and

hastily flung the offending object beyond reach. Deprived, the youngster lifted a face of illimitable patient reproach. His sad gaze wandered to the grandfather, then returned to Dealand where it clung fascinated. He surrendered mildly.

"Why do you allow such a filthy habit?" Dealand stormed, furious at himself, but the old man merely answered with some indistinguishable jargon.

"He has always eaten—so. Ten of them haff so eaten."

He had deftly finished the task of easing the leather of the highly polished shoe, but now he begun on it again. One would have said that he hated the shoe from the way he pounded and pummelled it. Only an honest well-made shoe could have withstood such treatment. But he was an artist at his craft and when Dealand slipped his foot into its covering again he smiled with satisfaction and tossed the old man a dollar. He suddenly felt warm and benignant so that not even the infant's star-fish gaze could disconcert him. He remembered that he was to be married that night; that the half-formed plans and fantastic imaginings of the past summer had suddenly fruited to this climax.

When hours later he found himself actually beside Joan, rushing through the tangy, scented air of the ascending road, he could hardly believe that it had come to pass that she was to be his own. He looked at her fair profile furtively and with the incredulous disbelief of bridegrooms. A change had come over the young girl since the morning upon the hillside. She was now a woman.

Her fear, her tremulous shyness, had vanished before a gentle calm that somehow stilled the tumultuous beating of his own pulses. In the vagrant moonlight he saw glimpses of her face. She seemed bathed in a waiting purity, a still, beautiful thing, as tangible as her cloudy dark hair and sweet quiet mouth. She trusted him with the marvellous prodigality of her sex. She followed him into the night and loneliness, facing unafraid the isolation of her soul with his. She knew no doubts anymore, having left doubt behind with a thousand treasures of girlhood.

They did not talk. Now that they were together forever, there seemed but little to say. A delicate, responsive chord thrilled between them which made words unnecessary. It was enough that now and then their shoulders touched in faint contact as the car panted jerkily over the rutty road that wound in a gradually ascending coil to the top of the mountain on the other side of which Annisdale and happiness waited for them.

Halfway up the incline the car sighed and passed away.

Dealand and Joan looked at each other in dismay; then, because they were young, laughed spontaneously.

"What I know about cars could be put under a postage stamp," acknowledged Dealand ruefully. "Do you suppose we could make it move again?"

But they could not make it move.

"We will walk," said Joan lightly, "it is only a little more than six miles. . . . Not very far . . ." she added with delicious shyness.

They started gayly. The night had been young and beautiful with a slender white moon, but now one of the unaccountable changes of a capricious season sent clouds born of nothing drifting across the sky. In the center of the road it was light enough but beneath the trees were steadily encroaching black velvet shadows. Joan walked daintily, her light skirt swinging clear of the dust. She was as strong as a deerskin thong and fine as an Ascension lily. Very often she lifted deep, lovely eyes to her lover's face above her shoulder.

"This will be like our life together," she said softly, "a slow, steady climb to the top of the hill, and then—we shall go down the easy side together—when we are old."

It was difficult for Joan to speak of what was close to her heart, but now she said:

"I am glad that it will be a little hard for us! I want to be poor—with you. I want some of the struggle with you!"

His face was not at her shoulder when she looked up that time. He had fallen a step behind. He was frowning. She waited for him perplexed, to her amazement he said nothing.

Her words grated on him unaccountably. Why should she speak of poverty with him, when all of her life she had been poor. He managed to keep back a cutting rejoinder that would have reminded her that he was actually offering more than she had possessed. A sense of irritation, a deep, subdued rancour, stirred in some unsuspected part of his being. He felt ridiculous to be here plodding across a mountain with a girl who should have been proud to marry him in the face of the world.

For the last half mile he had been conscious of a trivial annoyance that insidiously urged the unrest of his mental condition. The new, expensive narrow shoes which the old shoemaker had pounded and stretched into shape were not made for mountain climbing, and to this was suddenly added a tiny persistent pain from which there was no relief. The point of a fine nail in one shoe had forced itself through the interlining leather and at every step dug viciously into his foot.

Joan went lightly ahead, noticing nothing. If he could only have stopped long enough to remove his shoe . . . but his egotism was too great for that. He could not visualize himself pounding at the inside of a shoe before Joan's eyes so he followed, stepping gingerly and biting his lips as he stumbled after her.

III

The darkness closed down upon them like the frowning brows of an enemy. Her light dress showed faintly like the glimmering wings of a moth, and though he could no longer see her face, her voice rippled on, taking courage from its seclusion. He could have learned a great deal about a woman's heart in that little while had he known enough to listen. But the nail drove into his foot with the fine insidious torment of a delicate revenge.

He could not escape from it, not even by walking slowly, for that gave him time to think.

What was he doing here? How had he allowed himself to be put in this wretched position? Where was the shrewd clear judgment that had lifted him from the common level to where he was free to climb? Then the thought of freedom was followed by contemplation of marriage. There was no freedom there. Marriage meant stretching an income to illimitable lengths the climb, with the burden on countless obligations to carry, like the Old Man of the Sea, upon a quivering back. There would always be the goad of responsibility to remind him, like the nail in his shoe.

"We must be nearly there," said Joan. "Why are you so quiet, dear. Look, we are almost to the top of the hill."

But he could endure it no longer. He made some futile excuse and sat down on a flat rock by the roadside. He was angry with her for being there, though she could not see what he was about. Sheltered by the darkness he begun to fumble at the knot in the lacing.

But he could not untie it. The lacings were tied into an impassive knot that had no beginning and no ending. He could not cut it because he had no knife. He had never carried a knife, even when he was a small, trading boy. He searched about the ground on either side for a sharp rock but there was nothing here but crumbling sandstone.

"What is it? What has happened?" cried Joan, in a small, trembling voice. She was frightened. She drew away and stood alone in the center of the road. It came upon her that she was here with a stranger. She did not know this man who groped about in the dust.

"I can't go on. We'll have to wait. A wagon may pass presently—" stammered Dealand. The sweat stood out on his forehead in little beads. He was ashamed and humiliated that he had

been beaten by a nail in his shoe. Still he would not explain, because he believed that no woman would understand how a man could be thwarted of his life plan by so trivial a cause. He refused to look up and meet her dim, questioning face. She had become a figure of fantastic meaning to which his love was a vague, shadowy background. The duty of loving was a galling burden —her claim a never decreasing unreality.

"Suppose no wagon comes," suggested Joan, in the same, small voice. "And it will soon be daylight. They will miss me. They will telephone to Annisdale—"

His foot was swelling. The pain was intolerable when he put his weight upon it. Suppose he should have to wait hours for relief.

"If we are not married when—when —my mother finds me—" faltered Joan.

A wagon came, but from the wrong direction. An honest market man making an abnormally early start around the country to gather in his quota of vegetables had taken the road across the mountain to Welland. He came across them there by the roadside and stopped good-naturedly. But he would not accept a bribe to turn about and take them to Annisdale. He said that his credit and the goodwill of his customers depended upon his basket of new beets.

It had grown a little lighter or perhaps their eyes were now accustomed to the darkness. Dealand and Joan faced each other across the prosaic nose of the sleeping market horse.

"We will have to go back," he said, "tomorrow your mother will give in. I'll go to her. I'll tell her—"

"You don't know my people," cried Joan sharply, a quiver begun at her feet and crept upward to her shaking lips. "There is—there is—someone else. They want me to m-m-marry him. They can make me do it."

The market man made the young lady as comfortable as he could. There was a stool in the cart and he placed her so her back would rest against the high seat. She was sitting there when Dealand, who had borrowed the teamster's knife, had finished cutting the laces of his shoe. The teamster himself interestedly did away with the protruding nail. It would have been easy enough to have finished the walk to Annisdale then, but oddly enough neither of them thought of that.

The driver walked around the cart to climb into his own seat. He did not spend his entire time buying and selling vegetables. Once, on a trip to the city he had seen a picture. It was of a woman seated on a stool in a cart with her hands tied and her head proudly erect before the furious multitude that swayed around the cart where she rode. After the way of country boors who have seen little and remember that little always, this simpleton was reminded of this picture by Joan sitting in his own cart.

During the long, jolting miles across the mountain he ruminated over this resemblance. The name of the picture eluded him but with the slow persistence of his kind he searched for and found in his dull mind, the meaning. It was something about a foreign queen who rode in a cart to a scaffold to have her head cut off!

IV

YESTERDAY there was a wedding in Welland. The bridal party drove grandly through the town and all the town was out to see. It was said that the bride could hang herself with pearls and diamonds down to her toes, but no one would have guessed it. She was as pale and beautiful as a bride should be but as simple as one of the village girls.

The bridegroom was on the other side of fifty.

The old shoemaker was sitting in his door when they passed and stopped from sewing long enough to blink his evil eyes, though he took a stitch from habit. It was bred in his bones to

honor their class. He was only bitter and silently hating toward the new customs, the climbers, the other class that threatened the trade he had learned seventy years ago. For him life revolved around his turning wheel. Sometimes it was even possible to deal a clever blow to the hateful other class and its innovations. Once he had driven a keen nail in the heel of an upstart's shoe. . . .

He bent over his work with a faint cackle as the last automobile went down the sunny street.

FOG

By Amanda Benjamin Hall

I WOULD that we might walk wet sands again,
Go softly scourged by fog against our lips,
Gray atoms in the loneliness and rain—
Invisible as storm-enshrouded ships.

And lost in silver space, intently pale,
Might fare as one with no dissenting word,
The tattered sea-mist for my wedding veil,
And each as free to motion as a bird.

For once, in that obscurity, we found
Our secret selves communing breath for breath,
And spoke without the medium of sound,
Like lovers on the other side of death.

IF a man should have a motor truck run over him, would he arise and seek another truck? Yet that is what a man does when a woman is false to him.

A WOMAN selects friends who are unattractive to the men she knows. A man selects friends who know attractive women.

IF a man is indifferent to a woman, she is usually interested in him. If a woman is indifferent to a man, he is always bored.

A WOMAN can get as much pleasure out of contemplating an indiscretion as a man can from telling about one.

down Center Street, when his eye encountered the new sign glowing under a mental polishing like a cryptogram in brass. Snowden was at that moment taking himself and certain chronic rheumatic symptoms to his family doctor. He looked up at the sign and paused. He was naturally among the participants of the general curiosity.

The sunlight was reflected from that polished sign in baffling sparkles. Aaron Snowden read the inscription slowly:

Helen Benham, M. D.

His wonder in its presence increased. And then his inquisitiveness led him into a singular and unpremeditated act. He mounted the three steps to the door and rang the bell.

A response to the summons came quickly, for an unhandsome woman, evidently Dr. Benham's housekeeper, opened the door.

"Is Dr. Benham at home?" asked Snowden, now very much surprised at his own eccentricity and wishing that his mind were agile enough to invent some excuse for an immediate departure. He already considered his action unjustifiable and not entirely within the proprieties. He hoped that no one had seen him go up the steps.

"Yes, just come into the waiting-room," the housekeeper told him.

Snowden followed the woman into the parlour, fitted as a reception-room for patients. At the end of the parlour was a closed door behind which, Snowden surmised, the mysterious Dr. Benham had her office.

Seating himself uneasily, there followed an uncomfortable two or three minutes. Then the closed door was opened and she who must be Dr. Benham walked into the room.

Aaron Snowden looked at her face and a faintness like a vertigo possessed him. He was seeing in Dr. Helen Benham something hitherto unknown, and even condemned, in Tod's Fork—a beautiful woman, and the perception removed from him, temporarily, his speech and his action.

Dr. Benham stood in the doorway looking at Snowden, her eyebrows a little elevated, in inquiry. Snowden stared at her, speechlessly shocked by her large eyes, her glistening hair, her reddened mouth, her short skirts and the untodsforkian curves of her figure.

Waiting a moment more in silence, the woman moved a little to the side.

"You've come to consult me, I suppose," she said. "Just step into the office."

Then she smiled wickedly upon Aaron Snowden.

For another moment his coma persisted, but his will at last functioned and he came to his feet. He walked across the room and followed the doctor into her sanctum. She closed the door.

She pointed him to a chair and seated herself at a desk near him.

"Now tell me what's the trouble," she said, serious and her smile gone.

Snowden was yet unable to speak. The phenomenon of sitting here alone in a closed room with this startling woman, who had even smiled at him, gave his articulating muscles a further paralysis. She waited a moment and then shook her head sympathetically.

"Atrophy of the vocal bands?" she asked. "I'm afraid—"

"Eh?" came from Snowden.

"Oh! My mistake! Then . . . then what is the matter, Mr.—?"

"Snowden," he mumbled.

"Mr. Snowden, tell me your symptoms."

Now at that request from his own doctor, Aaron Snowden would have delivered himself of a sigh, crossed his legs and launched into a long recitation of his aches and pains. But sitting opposite this woman and her allure he found it impossible to tell her of his sciatic twinges. In a few moments she had aroused in him an acute sense of masculinity, the masculinity that should be well-muscled, Viking-like and unknown to the gouty diathesis. Snowden expanded his chest a little.

Dr. Benham waited for him to speak. But Snowden's phlegmatic mind found

no words. He was at once excited and supremely uncomfortable.

Then the Doctor smiled at him again. Her darkly fringed lids narrowed a little and her eyebrows went slightly up.

"Do you mean" she said slowly, "that you just came in here to see *me?*"

"Eh?" exploded Snowden once more. And following, clumsily: "Well, suppose—"

"Why, this Tod's Fork," put in Dr. Benham, "must be a more live place than I imagined. So you're one of the gay birds here, Mr. Snowden?"

Snowden was shocked, but vastly flattered. Never before had a woman looked at him archly nor put this note of devilishness into a conversation. And on his own admission he had been convicted of calling on Dr. Benham for purely extra-professional reasons. The realization was too devastatingly novel and he was once more bereft of vocal power. Another silence came.

At last Dr. Benham arose.

"I've enjoyed your little visit," she said. "You must be sure to come in again, Mr. Snowden. I find myself very lonely at times. And—please don't say anything about this meeting to anybody—you understand?"

As she concluded with these words she bent toward him delightfully. It was the final artistic touch. Aaron Snowden got up and went out of her office with a complete self-admission of deviltry. He dared to press Dr. Benham's hand as he mumbled a good-bye. He resolved to come again.

But as he went down the steps from the Doctor's house he was unfortunate enough to encounter Darwin Hawes, an equally prominent member of the Tod's Fork community and himself a trustee of the other, the Chalk, church.

"Good morning," said Hawes, looking curiously at Snowden.

"I've been making a little call on my physician," said Snowden, somewhat sullenly.

"Well, Aaron, you've changed doctors then, I see?"

"Yes, I have," said Aaron, and parted with no more words.

Hawes walked slowly, ruminating.

His own curiosity was no less than any other person's. . . . He wheeled and looked down the street. Snowden had disappeared around the corner. There was no one in sight.

Hawes turned back, walked rapidly to the house bearing the bright and mysterious brass plate, mounted the steps and rang the bell.

II

"THE inconvenience of the rule of public opinion," says Stendhal, "is that while of course it secures liberty, it meddles with that with which it is not concerned—private life, for instance."

A community like Tod's Fork is the very substance, the full blossom, of complete democracy. Hence everyone in Tod's Fork is concerned with the business of everyone else and men like Aaron Snowden and Darwin Hawes cannot even make a change in their professor of physic without that becoming the common and inconvenient property of the town.

As the whispers of their visits to Dr. Benham came gradually to many lips, an increasing percentage of the Tod's Fork male population went themselves to consult the new doctor on one or another pretext. A subtle and deadly virus had been spread about in this community of former perfect rectitude.

But to all Dr. Benham was not equally receptive. The greater percentage of those who went to see her were treated with a professional frigidity. It seemed that Dr. Benham was interested only in the more well set-up men in Tod's Fork, in other words, the prominent men of the town. Of these, four or five called at her office regularly, although each was unaware of the visits made by the others. The station of these men in the Tod's Fork life explains their ignorance, for the elevation of their positions preserved them from the common and proletarian jest.

The experiences of Aaron Snowden, the first to step into this distressing path of communal degeneration, may

be taken as typical of all the rest. In a greater or lesser degree, the indiscretions of the others were of the same order and were engineered by Dr. Helen Benham in a similar fashion.

A few days after the initial meeting, Aaron Snowden called again at the office of Dr. Benham. As before, he was ushered into the waiting-room, and seated himself alone there, staring at the door of the inner sanctum.

A few moments passed over and as on that first day that door was opened and Dr. Benham was revealed standing within the threshold.

She looked at Snowden, smiled instantly, and bent a little forward.

"Come in," she said, in a low, conspiratorial voice.

Snowden was this time a trifle more assured. He arose, grinned foolishly, threw back his shoulders like a chief entering battle and walked toward the door. Once inside, Dr. Benham closed it swiftly.

"Now we're together again—you naughty person!" she exclaimed softly.

In Tod's Fork repartee does not exist. Aaron Snowden raised his right eyebrow with a ponderous roguishness.

"Oh, I know all about you!" continued Dr. Benham. "And don't you just occasionally feel ashamed of yourself, coming here to see me, you married man!"

She leaned forward with her smile like a siren playing upon him. Very awkwardly Aaron Snowden extended his paw, groping for her hand, and Dr. Benham permitted its capture. As his fingers closed over it he was stirred by its cool softness. He knew nothing to say, and he sat there looking at her . . . and holding her hand . . .

A few minutes of this deviltry, and Dr. Benham arose suddenly, taking her fingers from his clasp. She bent her eyes upon him, wide and fascinating.

"You mustn't stay with me any longer today," she whispered. "We will have to be careful."

Stepping to the door, she opened it, and then, closing it again, she stood with her back to the panels, facing Snowden.

"Promise me one thing before you go," she said.

"What?" he asked.

"I get tremendously lonely here. But we mustn't see each other too often. So promise me you'll write me a little letter once in a while."

It was an astounding proposal, but Aaron Snowden was nevertheless extensively flattered. One more touch to his growing worldliness!

"Yes, I'll do that," he agreed ponderously.

"Don't be afraid to tell me what you think of me," said Dr. Benham, with a provocative smile.

III

THE *soto voce* information that now ran like a diabolic counterpoint through the Tod's Fork social intercourse was made more deadly by its lack of definiteness. Imagination for scandal was thus given free play. Insidious acts were imputed to more than the ones really implicated. A cutworm was at the root of Tod's Fork's life.

One name alone among the leading men of the community was fast against all slander—the Hon. Gersham Farquhar. As the weeks passed this Farquhar became in many eyes a symbolic being, a personification of all that was Tod's Fork's rectitude, an impregnable righteousness.

Farquhar, because of his position, was the last to hear what was now in the common parlance. He greeted the first whisperings that came to him with a heavy incredulity, but their subsequent persistence had its effect. His mind, believing little by little, acquired a complementary indignation that enlarged like a bubble with each new puff of suspicion.

This process of indignant inflation was one that could not continue indefinitely without resultant action. Although Gersham Farquhar was not a man of quick decision, the persistent rumors moved him at last. He deter-

mined to go himself to Dr. Helen Benham, investigate her, and if the whispered reports were true, take steps to eliminate her from Tod's Fork community.

One morning, therefore, Farquhar stepped out of his office decided on this very mission. As he walked down the street he made a portentous figure and his long coat, with flapping tails, black and somewhat greened from age, was an allegory of the entire code heretofore considered most admirable in Tod's Fork. Yet as he reached the brass sign of the female interloper, his immense and gargantuan purpose was diverted by an unexpected and somewhat dramatic event and it was not until several hours later that he paid his first visit to the medical siren.

The day before the morning of Gersham Farquhar's expedition, Aaron Snowden had been the recipient of a brief note which only by good fortune had escaped the eyes of his wife. It was from Dr. Benham, and although he had written her warmly several times, and had seen her several times since the writing, this was the first communication through the mail she had ever made with him.

It was a short document and held a request. Dr. Benham asked her dear Mr. Snowden to come and see her about ten o'clock the next morning.

Snowden put the missive in his pocket with great satisfaction. He had made remarkable progress. There was something about him that captivated beautiful women.

The next morning he rang the bell at Dr. Benham's and was admitted by her housekeeper. He walked into the reception-room—and was there astonished to see, seated and waiting, Darwin Hawes and still another of the elect, Joshua Jones!

He had presence of mind enough to gruffly say good morning. Taking a seat, he found himself very much annoyed and considerably curious. What did Hawes and Jones want there? They made his own presence very inconvenient. Little Helen would be greatly put out when she saw them.

But only a few seconds were vouchsafed him to develop these ruminations, for the bell rang once more and a moment after, still another time, and there entered, one closely upon the heels of the other, two more of Tod's Fork's eminents, Jacob Freed and Benjamin Canby. These two stared in surprise at the waiters already in the room and equally in surprise, one at the other. Thy found chairs and entered into the now general and portentous silence, marred from perfection only by the breathing of Canby, who was a little asthmatic.

It would be tedious to record the individual thoughts of these five men, the Tod's Fork aristocracy, and a summing up is possible anyway when it is said that their minds moved in general to a growing consternation. To what this might have led finally no one knows, for their silence was suddenly suspended by a jar of the door leading into Dr. Benham's inner office.

This door opened and Dr. Benham was revealed to them all, standing there, and smiling upon the quintette as she had smiled upon them individually many times before.

"Good morning," she said, and smiling still.

Several throats were cleared, two or three mumbled a greeting, there was a sudden epidemic of feet-shuffling.

Dr. Benham came into the room and she was seen now to hold in her hand a little pile of closely packed envelopes.

"I have asked you gentlemen here—" she began . . .

Then the realization beat itself into the several brains of the assembled Tod's Fork Lotharios. The presence of the others was not an accident, but a planned thing! Each, doubtless, had received a note from Dr. Benham. Each had been calling on her. Each . . . the chain of inferences was endless!

"—because I feel that you have all been somewhat indiscreet. We have

had some pleasant times together, but I fear without sufficient adroitness on your parts. You have all of you exposed yourselves to dangers. I refer, particularly, to *these*."

And Dr. Benham shook the package of envelopes in her hand. With their attention focused upon them the men in the room recognized their nature—she was holding, bundled together, the letters each of them had written to her!

"Just for example," continued Dr. Benham.

She paused a moment while she swiftly withdrew a sheet from an envelope.

"Take this: 'My Little Peaches and Cream, I am writing a—"

"Stop!" bawled the man named Freed, and thus established the authorship.

Dr. Benham smiled and obeyed, but withdrew another folded sheet.

"Or this," she said.

"Don't read that!"

Hawes was on his feet, his vast abdominal expanse somehow shrunken under the normally ovoid investiture of his black waistcoat.

"Well," said Dr. Benham, "I won't. I think anyway the experiment has demonstrated the really unfortunate nature of these letters. Suppose I should lose them? I have been known to be just that careless! And they were found? And published! I know that every one of them would be safer in the hands of the writers."

Again she stopped and smiled upon the consternation-stricken group in front of her like a Cheshire cat contemplating five cornered mice.

"I think," said Dr. Benham at last, "that these letters are worth at least five hundred dollars each to the writers . . ."

Followed a deep silence. Even the asthmatic wheezes of Canby were stilled.

Then Aaron Snowden, his face greatly blanched, and emitting a sound like an internal gargle, thrust his hand into his inner coat pocket and removed his check book. . . .

IV

The Hon. Gersham Farquhar had about reached the house occupied by Dr. Helen Benham when a very astonishing thing happened. The door of that house opened and one by one there filed out, solemnly, the five most prominent men, in addition to himself, in Tod's Fork.

Farquhar stopped, staring, as if he were witnessing an apparition. And then his face became reddened with righteous anger.

This was all too much! The business had become flamboyant, open, unashamed! They now went in herds and droves. . . . He broke rapidly into a walk and thrust himself in the midst of the silent and departing group.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I think you will agree with me that affairs have reached a stage that some sort of an understanding, for the good of Tod's Fork, must be had between us. I want you all to follow me to my office."

He turned magnificently—and was followed. He was not aware that his summons might have been indignantly ignored had not these men that morning passed through a frightful ordeal. At the sight of Gersham Farquhar and his heavy impressiveness they seized a glimmer of hope. Perhaps he could do something. . . .

Ten minutes later, with the entire company seated behind the closed doors of the mayor's office, halting confessions were given. The extortion under threat that had been exercised upon them was admitted and bitterly denounced. All understood the character, now, of Helen Benham, M.D. A pernicious adventuress, a person whose continued presence in Tod's Fork would bring about inconceivable harm.

"There are means," said Gersham Farquhar finally, "by which this woman can be made to leave Tod's Fork. I am certain that I can demonstrate to her the futility of endeavouring to defy the official powers. I shall go and interview her this morning. It is lucky that the unfortunate parts you gentle-

men have played have had no worse consequences than the loss of some sums of money."

Gersham Farquhar arose and the others with him. They accompanied him to the street and watched him as he walked in magnificent and righteous assurance down its length.

In the figure of Gersham Farquhar, marching then to combat with Dr. Benham the adventuress, there was that which was heroic Habilimented in his sombre black he represented the stern rectitude that had so in other days characterized Tod's Fork. In his person he championed all the older and virtuous order. He was a towering bulk of right. He was an overwhelming crusader of the pure.

So Gersham Farquhar appeared, as he drew close to the diabolic sign in brass. All the hope of Tod's Fork was bound up in his being. . . .

He went up the steps and pushed the bell-button. . . .

V

It was not until the next morning that the news came devastatingly to Tod's Fork. All that talk which had heretofore been said under-breath now flared in open shamelessness, for Tod's Fork was at last irreparably humiliated and debauched.

Its last citadel had fallen: Gersham Farquhar had eloped with Helen Benham

TELEPHONES

By Charles Hanson Towne

THINK of the bells that are ringing
All over the great city!
Think of the words that are singing-
Words of love, and pity

Yet there is one number only
That I want more than all.
Strange that I, who am lonely,
Dare not enter the call!

WHEN a woman tells you of her previous love affairs it is because she suspects you do not realize how fascinating she is.

CHILDREN are sometimes inconvenient reminders of what would otherwise have been a most successful divorce.

EVERY wife has certain household gods whom she daily praises aloud—the men she might have married.

LOVE IS . . . .

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

LOVE is as sudden as the jolt of a cocktail on an empty stomach, and as lasting as the odor of gasoline on old gloves. . . . It is as penetrating as the wails of a baby at midnight, and as irritating as a new shoe that pinches. . . . It is as beautiful as a dog's recognition of old friends, and as disappointing as the taste of one's first *pâté de foie gras*. . . . It is vulgar as Martial, and as dainty as my grandmother's handwriting. . . . It is as unashamed as a raw oyster, and as old as the jokes in *Punch*. . . . It is as new as the last woman you have met, and as unsatisfying as her first kiss. . . . It is as prevalent as the measles, and as rare as a blue-eyed brunette. . . .

Love is, briefly, an odd emotion that is not unusual.

GIFTS

By Babette Deutsch

WITH a mechanic punctuality
The days go by; yet haunted with surprise,
As for a man who in the glass may see
Staring into his own, another's eyes.
Marked by such simple things: the words you said
When last we met; some intimate old jest;
Or sunset will recall your lifted head,
Ruffled and dark against the windy west.
Each street we walked has that heart-clutching look;
Each hour brings its gift of you, each place:
A song you whistled, or a turn we took,
Or a remembered strangeness in your face.
And desperate, I take all, because I know
These are the cost of that I must forego.

MAN lives alone from choice; woman from lack of choice.

METAMORPHOSIS

By Maurice Joy

I

I DO not like the red flare of such love as too many poets describe. The approach through passion has always seemed to me as garish and vulgar as an Italian alleyway. All this thunder and surge is excellent for the primitive who have a primitive function to perform. But we whose mission is to make an art of life must see to it that our minds never drop the reins. Let the heart quiver and strain like a thoroughbred smooth-flanked at the starting gate, but let the mind choose the course and the post. Love, in a word, should be an intellectual adventure like a fine comedy; the sensation of its climax no more than the feathery delight of a hand passing over polished ivory.

I stood alone under a grey sky on a railway platform in the West of Ireland some years ago. The twilight made everything impalpable as the single column of smoke curling slowly up into the clouds. I was thinking of curiously distant things, a picture by Watteau, a poem by Verlaine, a white leg that I had once seen through a Parisian window and kept as a secret memory.

Then the train came in and I entered a dim compartment. I saw no more at first than that a woman was seated in the far corner with some luggage on the seat beside her. Then, as my eyes grew more accustomed to the dimness, I saw that she was a widow, and then again that she was young. My eyes dropped from her face, a filmy moon, and the white band on her bonnet down to her two white hands folded on her lap. She met my eyes for a second; then let her lids flutter down shyly over her quiet eyes.

One, two, three stations passed and, the darkness growing, I began to keep my eyes more steadily on that austere corner. There was a subtle pleasure in wondering whether from there two eyes were fixed on me; all had become black save the white haze which was the young, quiet face. I did not move. She did not move.

I soon forgot the rattle of the train and felt myself enwrapped in silence. There was a sense of exquisite mystery about everything; my imagination became enlivened with the stir of a secret life. I seemed to be in the midst of conversation with my companion. . . . She was telling me how she wished to move in and out through life with no more rustle than the faint music of silk, leaving nothing to be remembered but a perfume that died ere it satisfied. This faint touching on things and leaving them was after my own heart . . . But had she really been speaking to me or was I dreaming?

The train began to stop suddenly and I heard the name of a junction shouted by a raucous porter. I knew I had merely been dreaming.

The porter came in and lit the lamp. The lady in the corner stirred quietly—

"Do we change here for Ballycrow?" she asked in a voice that blended softly with all her quietness.

The porter told her that we did not and she was relieved. I was more than ever interested, for I too was going to Ballycrow. I knew everybody there from my frequent fishing trips. She would probably be visiting someone I knew, or perhaps she might even be

going to the same hotel I went to. She might even be about to stay there for a time and who knew . . . who knew?

I did not dare to speak to her; she attracted and repelled speech in a curious way. Scarcely had the lamp been lit when I felt that she had begun to look at me. Had she too been dreaming in the previous darkness. . . . Who knew?

I could see her better now. As she peered through the window into the ever-gathering night, I saw the line of her figure; it is in line rather than in color that I would have love expressed, line undulating adorably so that we know not where it begins or whither it goes, whether it ends in a strand of hair like an angel's banner or in a little foot that points to a miraculous rose springing from barren ground.

The line of her figure was charming.

II

At last we were upon the metal bridge that crosses the river outside Ballycrow. The silver sheen of the water was barely visible through the ugly ironwork. I saw that my companion was trying to peer through and I wanted to tell her how really beautiful the river was. But I feared to offend her. Nevertheless, it was easy to say as I reached up to the rack and took down my bag:

"This is Ballycrow."

She seemed to float back into life out of the dreamy posture she had taken.

"Thank you," she said. "I wonder if you can tell me which is the best hotel there."

"The Railway," I answered quickly. "I am going there myself."

"I didn't know . . . it is my first time here . . . is it far from the station?"

"About a mile, but they send a car to meet the train."

"Thank you."

In a minute or two we were in the station. The hotel porter had not yet arrived and there was no one to take our bags. I jumped on to the platform with mine and looked around. Then I saw that she had picked up her own luggage.

"Allow me," I said. I took her bag and dropped it on the platform—rather hastily, for I wished to help her down from the awkward step. Then I saw that she had another package and I offered to take it. She gave it to me a little reluctantly because, I thought, of my clumsiness in dropping the other.

"Please be careful," she said. "It contains the ashes of my dear, dead husband."

I bowed. She gave me her hand. I could not help feeling sorry that it was now gloved. Then the hotel porter came up and saluted us. I told him to take the bags. She and I walked out to the car, and I carried the ashes of her dear, dead husband under my arm.

III

On the car as we drove to the hotel she asked me not to speak of the ashes.

"These people are superstitious," she said. "And they do not know me."

"But may I ask . . . ?"

"A little later . . . perhaps I shall tell you."

When we arrived at the hotel she surprised me by telling the maid in charge that she did not need a room for the night. It was eight o'clock—what did she need?

"I should like a little supper," she said. "And I want a car at midnight to drive to Carntual."

"At midnight, ma'am," said the incredulous maid.

"Yes, please, at midnight."

There was a quiet finality in her voice that prevented the maid from asking further questions. In her movements was that fragile artificiality Wilde found in the women of Watteau. But one did not associate her with color; one thought of silverpoint, old-world, sensitive and yet obscurely precise.

At last we were alone.

"Of course, you are wondering," she said

"Yes."

"It is rather strange. . . . You see my husband was a poet. . . . We spent our honeymoon here in the west. . . . One whole day we spent on Carntual looking down on all the hills around us and even out to the Atlantic. . . . He was Irish . . . I am French."

"Ah! That is why I thought of Watteau."

"You think me like a Watteau? . . . My husband used to say it. . . . He died a few months ago . . . in Paris . . . he could not bear to be buried. He wished to be cremated, and I had it done. . . . We put incense and cassia and all manner of strange perfumes in the coffin. . . . Even yesterday his ashes were still sweet with them."

"And you carry them about with you forever?"

She shook her head.

"No. . . . He asked me to wait until the gorse was crackling on Carntual, all golden you know, and the heather in purple bloom, and then take his ashes to the top and scatter them to the four winds of Eirinn, as he said —at sunrise. . . . That is why I am here."

It would have been ridiculous to speak any of the commonplaces of condolence to one about to perform obsequies so rare and loyal.

"A beautiful ritual," I said.

"Yes . . . you know Carntual?"

"Very well."

"It will not take me more than an hour to drive there . . . will it? And two hours to climb? Three rather, it will not be so easy in the dark and I have to carry the urn."

"You will bury the urn there . . . one imagines?"

"No. . . . I am to break it and scatter the pieces through the stones of the great cairn that people say was raised in memory of Ossian . . . my husband was a pagan."

"You are leaving here at midnight . . . an hour will take you there even with a tired horse. You will take three hours, as you say, to climb. That will be four o'clock. . . Does the sun rise so early?"

"It rises at four-twenty-four exactly. . . . I have some poems of my husband's to read before I give his ashes to the winds."

"But it will be very cold up there in the raw morning . . . three thousand feet above the sea."

"Three thousand four hundred and fourteen," she corrected me.

I wondered at the preciseness, the same preciseness she had shown as to the exact minute of sunrise. It was the preciseness of a liturgy rather than of an almanac.

"But," she went on. "I shall have a little fire in any case. I have brought charcoal and incense and a little sandalwood. I shall gather some dry ferns too and a little peat . . . and my diary, the diary of our married life."

"You would burn that!"

"Yes. . . . I want all the exquisite things in it to melt into air with his ashes. . . . I want it to be the source of the perfumed flame that will gain favor for him with the ancient gods."

"Seriously . . . you believe in them?"

"Yes . . . Lugh, Dana, Aengus, the god of love . . . they were my husband's gods. . . . I came to believe in them. . . . One does, you know, or else . . ."

She shrugged her shoulders, hesitated a little and went on:

". . . else one grows terribly apart . . . worse than death."

"You can say that . . . with all your devotion. You can really say there is something worse than death."

"Loneliness, monsieur . . . loneliness."

"But are you not lonely now . . . without him?"

"Not yet, monsieur, not yet . . . not until I forget him."

We were sitting by a smouldering fire. I wanted to ask her why she thought she would forget him, but I felt she would simply say, *"C'est la vie."* Yet her loyalty to his memory was not to be questioned.

I stole a glance at her. She was resting her arm on the back of her chair with her head almost completely turned away from me and her eyes on the far ceiling.

Then she turned around and a little smile played over her face. There was not a trace of sentimentality in the soft eyes. One hand began to toy with her dress.

"It is so, is it not?" she said. "One does forget . . . it would be terrible not to."

"Yes," I said. "It would."

She rose quietly.

"You will excuse me . . . I have some writing to do."

She went over to the writing-table and began to write. I found a book and pretended to read. She wrote on and on . . . never speaking.

I could not read. Her presence filled my imagination with strange pictures . . . most of all one of a nun hidden away in a medieval oubliette engrossing a suddenly found fragment of Sappho's on surreptitious parchment.

Then it was midnight. She rose and gave me her hand.

"Perhaps we shall meet again some time . . . by chance," she said.

"By destiny, madame," I ventured to say.

She smiled quietly and went out. I returned to my chair. For a time I watched the struggle of the flames . . . but they were too turbulent . . . my mind was full of the beauty of slender trees growing upward through the twilight, the sap stirring secretly within them like love in the heart of a subtle woman. . . . I took up my hat and strode out into the starlight.

IV

I was able to read my watch by the light of the stars and the moon. It was long past three o'clock. I had come quickly over the road and the lower slopes of the mountain. I should reach the top by four . . . by dawn . . . the eastern sky had only just begun to turn a watery gray.

At last I was over the ultimate ridge, and the cairn rose before me fifty yards away. I trudged noisily through the heather and ferns so that I might not break in unexpectedly on the funeral rites. Quite suddenly I came upon her sitting under a great boulder.

"I have been watching you for ten minutes," she said.

"You expected me? . . . I was afraid to disturb you."

"Why have you come?"

"Curiosity . . . the strangeness of it all."

"You would be an acolyte . . . perhaps?"

"Love's acolyte."

"It will soon be time for the ceremony . . . but why have you come?"

"I was interested . . . I . . ."

"I had promised to be alone."

"I shall go at once . . . I am sorry . . . but where there was so much beauty I . . . I ventured."

"You see I trusted you. I thought your sensibility would have prevented this."

"I shall go at once."

"Thank you."

I rose and bowed to her. Then I was conscious that she had removed her hat and veil and that a shapely foot was just to be seen beyond the rim of her gown. I bowed again and turned away.

"Stay," she said. "After all, perhaps it does not matter. . . . One should not turn away a worshiper of beauty . . . and then you are a stranger . . . it is different . . . I might have met you here instead of on the train. . . . After all, I came alone."

"I hardly feel like a stranger. Somehow . . ."

"Ah, yes," she said a little sadly. "I know . . . I know. . . . That is why my conscience is not quite still. . . . Suppose you stay here, here with your back turned to me while I go to the cairn. . . . The sun will soon be over the rim. . . .I want to have my fire in full blaze when he appears."

She allowed me to help her up, and I handed her the funeral urn. Then

she put her stockingless feet into her shoes and walked towards the cairn.

I sat down and waited; it seemed an age, but I dared not turn around. Then the great disc of dancing light came over the rim and I heard her call in a joyous voice:

"Come . . . come."

I rose, surprised by the joyousness of the voice, and turned towards the cairn. She was standing barefooted on the topmost stone in a loose softly-flowing blue garment, with her hair loose in the wind. From about her feet a column of smoke rose lazily and drifted away to the north.

"The fire will soon be dead," she said as I came near. "But the feast awaits you."

I climbed on to the cairn.

"His ashes have gone on the wind," she continued. "I have burnt my sorrow and bitterness on this funeral pyre."

"And your diary?" The paper was smouldering.

"Not my diary . . . the other woman's letters. . . . I found them after his death. . . . I have kept my promise. . . . Listen to the gorse crackling . . . look at the heather in bloom. . . . But I have burned my widow's weeds . . . in a minute they shall be all consumed and then for our feast."

The fire smouldered for a little and died. Then she sat down and opened a little package. In it was a flask of sauterne and some *foie gras* sandwiches.

"To the dawn, monsieur," she said as she lifted her glass.

"To your dawn, madame," I answered.

"To forgetfulness," she replied.

I looked into her eyes. They were like lonely pools of bright water in a forest.

"To love," I said gently.

"Ah, monsieur . . ."

Her sigh died away on the south wind with the last curl of smoke from her sorrow's pyre. . . . Her comely little hand fluttered a minute within mine and then rested there like a warm snowflake.

THESE BE THE GIFTS

By John McClure

THESE be the gifts ye bring
To make my life's delight;
A fireside at evening
And sweet dreams at night,

Trust me, I treasure more
These dear familiar things
Than all fame's misty glory
Or purple pomp of kings.

L'ART NOUVEAU

By Roubaix de l'Abrie-Richéy

SHE was a generous patroness of the newer expressions in art. Doubtless her heart was greater than her comprehension, but there was radical blood in her veins. Whatever was unusual and new must be good. She hounded the *dernier cri*.

She lionized the exponents of the new cults. At her country house she held innumerable week-ends devoted to the Cubist painters, the *vers libre* poets, the devotees of the actionless drama, and the writers of orchestrated prose. This time it was the musical Futurists.

With a friend, she, the hostess, sat on the broad verandah in the early morning sun; the big French windows of the music room open near them. A restful quietude hung over the whole spacious chamber as if it breathed in relief, after the endless din of discord that had shaken its walls the previous evening.

Suddenly the two women heard the sprightly step of the great radical professor in the room. A few weird notes sounded forth from the piano.

"Ah, he has slipped down to compose one of his marvelous productions."

A jumble of sound smote their ears. "Ah!" cried they, in a whisper of awe. "Isn't it just too wonderful to be in the presence of genius!"

"If we could only see his slender white fingers running over the keys!"

"And such wonderful hair—and romantic eyes!"

Tiptoeing to the window they looked in.

A maid was vigorously scrubbing the soiled keys.

SONG OF AN OLD LOVE

By Muna Lee

THE east unrolled a sheet of gold—
Gold for river and flower and limb
As Helen now to Paris is,
Even the sun of love grows dim,
All things gold fade gray and old.
As Helen once to Paris was,
Was I to him.
Am I to him.

JAZZ

By Ben Hecht

IN the fourth year of her married life Hazel Wombat experienced a desire to be free. She was married to an acute psychologist who specialized in primitive cultures. The fellow's name was Hubert Wombat, and he earned his bread by devoting three hours of each day, barring Sundays and Saturdays, to the enlightening of some two hundred addle-headed, rattle-brained, vaporous numskulls who, such is the humor of life, were called students.

During these three hours Wombat was never himself. Naturally a quiet, kindly man given to agreeable and erudite pursuits, he became when confronted with the classes over which he functioned as Professor of Anthropology a creature disgruntled and embittered. A vast impatience with the ignorance of the world concerning the things which it had taken him twenty years to discover and memorize was the basis of Professor Wombat's metamorphosis in the class room.

Daily the young men and women who grudgingly exposed themselves to the Professor's wisdom listened with stoical ears to the bizarre expoundings of their instructor. Rising from his desk the Professor would fix them with a violent eye and hold forth.

"The Gorngai and Tungu are afraid to visit the places of the dead for fear the spirits will make them ill. The ground where dead are buried is often regarded as a good conductor of disease. In Tenimber and Timorlaut strangers are not buried for fear that sickness may thus spread over the country. From this idea comes the common objection to burial among early peoples, no less than in modern times, when cremation is becoming fashionable. The Masai do not bury people because, as they say, the body would poison the soil. Exactly the same practice and belief is found in East Central Africa. This idea, combined with the fear of ghosts, has helped to form the relatively late phenomena of ancestral and Chthonian hierology."

It was evident even to one of Professor Wombat's preoccupation that such enthralling statistics fell upon brains too inconsequent to be stirred, too trivial in their capacities to be illuminated by great truths. The knowledge of this would cause him to break off suddenly in his discourses, thrust forth his lower lip, tug twice upon his slight and pointed beard, and emit a snort in which were concealed the contempt and despair of a man harassed beyond reason by the fates.

But behind the daily hardship to which the specific stupidities of his students subjected him lurked an irritation produced by an ignorance more general, a vapidity more colossal. It was the notion of these students that primitive peoples were a debauched and hopeless lot. In vain did Professor Wombat point out the elaborate taboos in Leti, Moa and Lakor. Useless were his violences of diction concerning the degeneration of the marriage systems in modern life from the custom in Nizhegorod, where the bridegroom's attendant walked thrice around the bridal party, his back against the sun, holding an eikon until, placing himself in front of the participants in the ceremony, he scratched the ground with a knife, cursing evil spirits and evilly disposed persons; in British Guiana, where a young

man before marriage undergoes an ordeal, his flesh being wounded and himself sewn into a hammock full of fire ants. Similarly he held forth concerning the practices among the Yezedees, where the bride is covered from head to foot in thick veils and when arrived at her home remains for three weeks in the corner of a darkened room before her husband is permitted to see her. But all in vain. The thousand and one instances of superior rituals among primitive peoples, the thousand and one illustrations of their religious, economic and social conventions which rendered them a more genuinely moral and less promiscuous set than the citizens of more recent civilizations, were received by his audiences as the perfunctory notions common to fuddy duddies unacquainted with the ways of the real world.

By his ceaseless exhortings concerning the intricate regulations of early societies Professor Wombat achieved in the third year of his efforts at the University of Chicago the nickname of "Tabs" or "Taboo Wombat." He was regarded by the student body, which in its ignorance fastened upon his course as a sinecure, to be a ranting, eccentric creature full of sneers and sarcasms and inexplicable angers. A certain respect was paid his tempers, a certain deference was shown to his unquestionable hatred of life in general and the class room in particular.

Among his fellow faculty members Wombat found a somewhat more congenial field for mental intercourse. Now and then a faintly diverting evening transpired, during which he listened with courtesy to the laments of Molmom, the aged philologist, and during which he, in turn, theorized to his heart's content concerning the researches of his friend Frazer among the Babar Islands. But in the main his leisure was devoted to the pursuit of dim statistics, the assortment of mildewed facts in anticipation of a volume he had been for five years preparing. The name of the volume was "The Psychic and Material Origins of Primitive Conventions."

He had married when he was thirty-six. The act had been attributed by his friends to his absent-mindedness, and his utter indifference to matters of contemporary importance. But, as a matter of fact, Wombat had married out of love.

He had encountered the woman, in the University library, which he had disdainfully visited one evening in quest of Van der Tuuk's "Bataksch Woordenboeck," an exhilarating volume concerned with the manners current among the Battas of Sumatra. A familiar tome opened before the lady attracted his eye. She was reading W. Ellis' "Polynesian Researches" and a strange warmth entered the savant's heart. Unaware as he was of the fact that the young woman had plucked the tome haphazardly from the shelves, he stood beside her overcome by an absurd rush of sympathy. With the simplicity common to all great scholars, Wombat sat himself down beside the reader, talked, argued, expounded and theorized. He left the astonished young woman with an emotion of lightness in his blood. The conversation had endured an hour.

Drawn by the memory of that hour, Professor Wombat sought the library on succeeding nights, wondering lonely about its corridors and through its rooms, his thoughts divided between the exogamous Melanesians and the person with dark hair and a somewhat snubbed nose with whom he felt an imperative desire to renew the happy discourse of the previous meeting.

Vague though his thoughts concerning this person remained, Wombat yet pursued her with the tenacity of a specialist in amours. Locating her on the third evening, he plunged at once into subjects close to his heart. With theories pointing out how the Kei Islanders, the Yumas, the Manyuemas, the New Hebrideans, the Fijians and the Ngurii had anticipated the inoculations of Jenner and Pasteur he wooed her. In her attentiveness he found evidence of a mental communion. In her smile, her frown, her silence he

discovered indubitable proofs of the kinship existing between the souls. All his erudite cogitations he poured out to her.

Devoted since childhood to what had become his monomania he had automatically avoided women. He had lived alone with his books. His diversion had been insect-haunted expeditions into plague ridden lands. His chief social activities had been among tatooed and disease-marked savages of African and Australian fastnesses. The repressed instincts of the man came now suddenly to the surface, and knowing not the words or gestures with which to clothe his dim yearnings, he exuded desperately his ethnological lore. It was during a discussion of the symbolical trial marriage customs found among the Halmahera, the Loanda and the Wakuasi tribes that Wombat touched the young woman's hand and experienced the first moment of bewilderment that had come to him in all his anthropological researches.

The remainder of Wombat's courtship was swift and certain. The young woman, whose name was Hazel, whose age was twenty-five, whose occupation was a somewhat bored and aimless study of music at a wealthy uncle's expense, married him for reasons best known to herself.

Wombat was for plunging into a district occupied by the Chiriguanos and the Andamanese for his honeymoon, and obtaining the first hand evidence he needed to confound the preposterous theories of Ploss and Eyre. A tour through Greece with a short and wholly unsatisfactory sojourn in Morocco was effected as a compromise.

After the trip Wombat and his bride returned to the University.

II

For the first year Hazel Wombat found a certain piquancy in her life. Being a woman of keen if aimless discernments, she perceived the qualities of the good professor, enjoyed even his violences, found relish most of all in his almost childlike preoccupations. She did not make the mistake of understanding Wombat's erudition. By listening adroitly she managed to acquire a superficial smattering of the worlds in which the savant's thought circulated. By moulding her tastes with equal adroitness she managed to achieve a sympathy for the man's strange and often picturesque career. Their home life became after the first year a placid state in which she ept weird jottings of vast benefit to her mate, and in which she agitated herself vaguely as his assistant in the compilation of "The Psychic and Material Origins of Primitive Conventions."

Gradually, however, an unrest seized upon Hazel Wombat. The memory of the world from which she felt herself effectually cut off returned to her. Originally neither capricious nor lusting after changing gaieties, the suppression of her instincts gave birth to certain violent longings in her. Not till well in the second year of her marriage, though, did she broach the subject with the Professor.

"It would be nice," she said on this occasion, "to go out a bit to the theater or the cafes, Hubert. We really see no one and do so little."

Wombat eyed her with no intelligence.

"Mm, mm," he said. "Mm."

"I mean it," Hazel pursued. "What do you say to going downtown tomorrow night, just the two of us, and having a—a spree?"

"A spree?" repeated Professor Wombat, narrowing his brown eyes and gazing up at the top shelf of his open bookcases. "Do you mean getting drunk?"

"No, no," cried Hazel, laughing hurriedly. "I mean just enjoying ourselves."

"Umph," said Wombat. "What more joy than—"

And callously he proceeded to outline to the lady of his bosom the peculiar exhilarations to be found in the study of the Nootka Indians, in the contemplation of the Dieri ceremonies

A full year passed before the subject was ventured again. This occasion, however, marked a definite change in the life of the Wombats. Smarting under the chagrined rebukings of her husband, Hazel repaired to her room and wept.

Although she had married the man as much out of curiosity and boredom as anything else, she had acquired an affection for him during the three years. His heartlessness, therefore, injured her. His indifference to her desires, therefore, lacerated her. She wept and dimly determined upon changing the conduct of her life, on asserting herself. Thereafter she intrigued desperately to uproot Wombat from his archipelagoes and jungles, to stir in him some social sense, some appreciation of modern excitements.

Against the calm, determined, lifelong monomania of her husband she fought cleverly, creating however nothing but discord, and bringing about nothing but a state of bewilderment for the professor and of unhappiness for herself. Wombat, chagrined by inexplicable tears and mysteriously inspired outbursts, sought futilely to reconcile her by inviting Molmon, the philologist, three consecutive nights to their home.

"I know he is rather old," he explained apologetically, "but the man has really a profound appreciation as well as a profound knowledge of Wachaga vowels."

From which may be seen at a glance this Wombat's complete incompatability.

Approaching the fourth anniversary of their wedded life, Hazel entered her husband's study one October evening, and sank dejectedly in a large leather chair. She had spent two days in seclusion. She had meditated upon matters as they stood, and as they might stand. She had reached a conclusion. Strange as it was, a love for Wombat had taken the joy from this conclusion and left her dejected, almost wavering.

"I have concluded," she said in a dry voice to Wombat, who looked up from his parchment at her entrance, "I have concluded, Hubert, to leave you."

"Yes," said Wombat, smiling agreeably.

"You're not listening, Hubert. Please listen. It's important."

With a sigh, Wombat laid down his pen. He experienced a sense of something unpleasant about to transpire. Of late unpleasant things had grown more and more frequent. He thought of the eighth chapter incomplete before him, and sighed again.

"Hubert," resumed Hazel, "I have concluded to leave you. I can't stand living this way any longer. I'm not married to a man, but to a museum. You devote all your time to your savages. You have neither respect nor love, nor—nor anything for me."

Staring with droll and bewildered eyes at the woman Wombat opened his mouth and remained silent.

"I want to be free, Hubert," she said. "I'm—I'm tired of being tied down as your shadow. I'm—I'm young and I want to enjoy myself."

"Good God!" exclaimed Wombat. "Good God!"

"I'm sorry, Hubert," Hazel went on, tears entering her eyes. "I've tried hard. But you simply won't understand. You're so lost in your work that you simply haven't any eyes for me, let alone intelligence. If only—"

Wombat rose weakly from his chair. A sense of shame was uppermost in him. He remembered sorrowfully certain things he should have done, certain things which would have averted this particular scene.

"I presume," he said huskily, "I presume I have been quite blind to—to this other."

"You have, Hubert," said Hazel eagerly. "You've just been lost in your own thoughts and never—never—paid any attention to me. I could have gone out myself but I didn't want to. I thought maybe you'd change—But you haven't—I'm going back to my uncle—"

"What," said Wombat dazedly, "can I do?"

The question brought a burst of tears from his wife.

"If there's anything I can do," Wombat pursued, feeling vaguely that he was heading right, "I'll do it. Merely tell me. Don't go away, Hazel. It's—it's terrible."

"It is," moaned the woman. "But you won't do it."

Desperately Wombat cried, "I will!"

The evening concluded in a scene of tenderness, in vows exchanged between Hazel and Wombat, in a promise by Wombat to lend himself to the diversions of his wife two nights each week.

"We'll start tomorrow night," cried Hazel, again radiant. "Just we two. We'll go to the theater and some cafe."

Wombat returned to Chapter Eight and held his pen over the closely written page.

With the woman and her tears out of the room, however, a lethargy had come upon him. The composition no longer lured him. His brain trembled upon thoughts of the future. What had happened? To what impossible things had he sworn himself? How could a creature so happily endowed as Hazel become afflicted with the desire to mingle with the superficial mob? What in God's name had inspired her with a longing to indulge in shallow, empty diversions? Wombat shuddered.

There was in Wombat's attitude a clear premise. All his life he had regarded the vulgar disturbances surrounding him and known by the words, Society. Pleasure, and Business, as the manifestations of an illiterate and colorless state of culture. Barring two concerts and the annual Haresfoot play at the University, which he as a matter of Quixotic duty attended, he had never descended to the level of those of his fellow academicians, who gave themselves over to the vulgarisms of the day. He had remained aloof, holding in contempt, as he held the vaporous numskulls of his classroom, the lures of the city. An excursion into the Greek drama, which he read in its original, a veritable debauch among certain exquisite French archeologists, comprised outside his scientific travels, his activities beyond his chosen occupation.

Now he had vowed to accompany her to theaters and cafes, to mingle with all manner of witless cattle, to listen to the raspings and guffawings of these stupid rendezvous. There had also been some mention of dancing! By Wilyaru and the seven thousand tapus of Bogota what malevolent destiny had brought about this thing! Chapter Eight remained as it was and sinking back in his chair Professor Wombat gave himself over to the contemplation of a tragic future.

III

The air was chill and the night above the vanishing buildings tinged with the jaundice of many blazing lights when Professor Wombat and his wife stepped from the crowded street into the gilded and mawkishly festooned interior of the Madison Inn.

Hazel, her eyes alight, her face glowing, followed elatedly the pilot who had appeared at the entrance. Conscious of her new clothes, the fetching tilt of her hat, the effective flare of her long, velvet coat, she walked with the air of one given to conquests. Behind her trailed the Professor. His eyes swung nervously from table to table, some occupied with laughing, chattering eaters, others empty and offering immediate refuge. Vainly he sought to concentrate upon the Zafimanelos of Madagascar, the subject of his ninth chapter, but his thought darted to the Niamniam and the King of Monbutto appeared grotesquely in his vision to further his confusion.

After an unhappy interval Wombat found himself seated at one of the tables facing his wife whom he was barely able to recognize. An unusual air was about the woman.

"Hubert," she murmured, laughing, "do look at the menu. We must order."

"You order," said Wombat and relapsed forthwith into a state of disordered lethargy. For this he had mar-

ried! Regret consumed him. The Wombat that the two hundred unfortunates of the classroom knew came to the surface. Dishes appeared containing pale foods.

"Aren't you hungry?" appealed the woman opposite him.

He raised his glowering eyes and transfixed her.

A look of fear and pain spread over her face.

"Oh, Hubert," she murmured.

Suddenly from a far end of the room Morey Stein's Original Dixie Jass Band struck up "The Livery Stable Blues." Wombat's mouth remained open and without speech, a habit of his when under the stress of surprise. To his ears came the guttural wailings of the saxaphone, the monotonous clanging of the cymbals, the sob and blare of brasses. A strange expression came into Wombat's brown eyes. Leaning forward in his chair he watched several couples arise from their tables and walk toward a clear space in the center of the Inn. The table of the Wombats bordered upon this clear space. His eyes opened wide and remained fixed upon the swaying bodies, the leaping shoulders, the abdominal gesturings which suddenly filled this space before him.

Women with bared shoulders and bared arms, with violent feet and wonderful contortions swept by him. Men bending, bowing, ululating, clung to them and wrestled with them. The movements grew wilder. The music remained hammering and wailing. Something familiar crept into Wombat's blood.

"Good Lord!" he muttered.

As the tumult of the band increased and the dancing waxed more furious Wombat's muscles quivered. Unconsciously his fingers sought his notation pad.

"In the Luang-Sermata Islands," he murmured, "and in Makiser—"

He became silent, and a film seemed to come over his eyes. For the moment Wombat thought of the ngadhungi dances of the Busy-busnyans. For the moment his brain raced back to a month amongst the Kurnai of Gippsland, a month spent in mastering each and every detail of the strange quicksteps performed there at the ceremonies of the ililika tabu. The wailings and snortings from the band across the room contributed an obbligato to his thoughts and memories. The crude staccato beat of the music, the brazen thumpings of the brasses kindled in his thought memories of the Perak drums of Malay and the Dyak tympani that beat among the Hills to the whine and shiver of strange reeds.

"Hubert," cried Hazel in alarm, "what is it?"

A moment later the diners at the Madison Inn witnessed a strange spectacle. They observed Hubert Wombat, professor of Anthropology, clasping the figure of his wife in his arms, leaping about upon the polished space set off by the deserted tables, leaping with a certain curious rhythm, a striking curious grace in his leaps. Louder the music wailed, echoes of jungle land, echoes of blood drinking villages beyond the Congo. Overcome with joy and pride, Hazel clung to the body of her husband. There was in his dancing something she had never felt before in the days when she had danced before their marriage, a peculiar exaggeration of the steps she had once learned, an almost fantastic amendment to the twistings she had mastered four years ago. Watching the admiring eyes that followed them about on the floor, Hazel spoke in her husband's ear, gasping and delirious.

"Hubert—I didn't know—you could dance—Oh, I'm so glad—you dance wonderfully—"

And Wombat, with the beating and the wailing of the music stirring into life vivid memories, unfastening grimly mastered anthropological data in his brain, nodded his head and panted:

"Yes—remarkable. Chapter Ten will be simple—and novel—A carefully traced theory on survivals—the survival of the Malekula ritual of—the

eight naraks—in the modern dance—as well as music—we will have to come often—I can trace directly—"

The music ceased and Wombat's words were lost in a clatter of applause from the dancers. Standing suddenly inanimate upon the floor Wombat moved his hands violently against each other. Mrs. Wombat clung ecstatically to his arm.

"I'll have to bring Molmom here," he cried enthusiastically in her ear. "We were talking of this very thing only eight years ago."

GOD MUST BE BORED

By Blanche Chesterton

EVERYTHING that I feel has been felt before.

You take me in your arms, close, so close to you; you kiss me, on the neck tenderly, then full on the lips, quickly, madly; you rouse strange, swirling joys from unsuspected depths of my heart.

The hour comes that you must go. Desperately I try to prolong the moment. I say, "Only a little longer! One more kiss!" I know it will never be again the same. I feel as if Life itself were slipping through my fingers. At last it is over. You go.

I fling myself down on a couch, and with closed eyes relive the Past, which but a moment ago was the Present.

Then comes pain, longing, fear. You are going half way across the world. Oh, I know you *had* to go. But it was all so quick, so short, so sweet, so mad. Months to come, when you return, *if* you return, as you so ardently now vow, it will not be the same.

Numbedly I pick up a book, some verses of a French poet, and lo, every pain, every ache, every hope, every desire of my heart lies dissected and quivering in his lines.

And he has been dead for centuries!

Do you wonder that I laugh?

A WOMAN, secretly, never quite forgives her husband for his poverty. A man, secretly, never quite forgives his wife for her age.

A MAN should love, before his marriage, at least one woman for every year he hopes to live with his wife.

THE loneliest man is merely the poorest liar.

DÉNOUEMENT

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

I WAS afraid, for I could see
  My old self toiling up the stair,
Could spin on looms of memory
  The burning samite of your hair.

I was afraid to climb and meet
  The cool gray magic of your eyes,
Afraid to live the old defeat,
  Forgotten under kinder skies.

I was afraid to find you there
  As strong and tranquil as before,
Waiting to bind me with your hair,
  Watching behind that ominous door.

I was afraid that you would think
  The old thoughts that the years dismiss,
Shaken as one upon the brink
  Of some impassable precipice.

Still I went in. Across the floor
  A bar of April sun—and, yes,
Fragrance of lilac, as before,
  To wake the heart's desirousness!

I stood and sought your speaking eyes.
  What silence should our lips atone? . . .
But suddenly with strange surprise
  I knew that I was there alone.

FIANCEE: A compromise with the Ideal. FIANCÉ: A compromise with Hope.

PASSÉE WOMEN

By G. Vere Tyler

OH! the *passée* women of a great city!

Like an army of martyrs they loom up! Like tired soldiers on a hopeless march they pass before my eyes! They press forward, but their victories lie behind them!

By *passée* women I do not mean that class designated as members of the underworld. My *passée* women are of a less frank world—our world. Our world of deception, lying, marriage; our world where vice is held as a precious secret, and virtue a target for men to aim at, possess, and discard! Oh! no, my *passée* women do not belong to the underworld. They belong to the world of you and me. They belong there by the right of birth, of wealth; by the right of effort, braggadocio; by their cleverness; by their courage to continue in social slavery, and many of them from the fact that they have never allowed themselves to be shoved off. But there—whether of high or low degree, whether of a Fifth Avenue mansion, a Newport cottage, or a small, dark flat—they are the feminine wreckage of the world. Among them, among this feminine wreckage, you may find the wearied, the dissolute, the embittered, the revengeful, the inebriated, and even the chaste.

What is a *passée* woman? An old woman? No. There are old women who have never been and never will be *passée*. A woman whose physical charms have faded? No! I know many such, sweeter than pale green grass under a fall of frost. A woman grown practically useless? No, not even she!

A *passée* woman is one who has reigned over men and who finds herself deserted by her subjects. She alone is the *passée* woman.

There is nothing in all the world, in my opinion, so absorbingly interesting, so fascinating to dissect, as this class of women who carry about with them, like tattered banners, remnants of their beauty. Damaged beauty, beauty that time and men—mostly men—have damaged, is tragically, wondrously pathetic.

It is for the sake of studying the faces of such, reading their lives through their faces, those strange, blighted countenances distorted by the passions of men and their own passions, that I so often find myself in places they frequent.

I have only to visit a tea shop, or sit in the lobby of a hotel, or the waiting-room of a big department store, or a railroad station, or attend a séance, or take a seat in a theatre, or be manicured in a beauty parlor, or have a room overnight in a woman's hotel, or lunch or dine at their clubs, or in a popular restaurant, or a side-street table-d'hôte place, and there they are like burnt offerings on the funeral pyre of life for my inspection.

Naturally there is a good deal of bluff about the *passee* woman. She has defied time and she is still defying humanity. Carrying her deep-seated secrets, she is at times a bit surprised at holding on to the rigging of life's ship. When not too oppressed, not too weighed down by some recent defeat, she usually carries her head aloft, presents a bold front. Her skirts would rustle if that kind of silk were in vogue.

And always, instinctively, her eyes follow men!

Manless she continues to dream of men. She is confused by her thoughts of men, her memories of men. Men she has conquered, men she has loved, served, used, profited by, or suffered through. They are always in the back of her head. They have been her game, her prey, her life!

Wherever there are lights, wherever there is food and drink, from the fashionable hotel down to the pearl inlaid places of Chinatown, there you may see the *passée* woman in her faded splendor struggling to forget, to deceive herself, to establish false hopes. What memories fill her tired, restless brain as she sits, often alone, deciding and undeciding, planning and stifling plans, plans that appear in a golden light to disappear in a futile mist.

These *passée* women, ofttimes in *passée* frocks, with their rouge and powder, and brow sticks, and lip salves, and hair dyes, in evidence, are frequently still good-looking, some grotesquely, tragically beautiful. But how hardened, how terribly hardened! As hardened as the face of the old Sphinx set eternally to resist storms and blistering sands.

But unlike the inscrutable Sphinx these faces present no mystery. They are, to me, all open books, or I think so, and who shall declare the difference? To my eyes these hardened faces reflect their lives as the still waters of a lake reflect the trees and bushes that edge it. Some speak to me of kind husbands who died; some of weak husbands who betrayed their worship; of callous ones who abandoned them; some of adored children who grew up and went away.

But these are the faint impressions partly obliterated, impressions that lie back of those that succeeded them, the lasting ones, the indelible ones, the ones obtained while clinging to a place, while forcing attention, while forcing passion, while keeping the roof over head, while fearing age or fearing younger women, while getting something openly or in secret, by fair means or foul, out of life.

II

One of the principal occupations of the *passée* woman is to forget. Alas! the effort of the *passée* woman to forget! How she drinks; how she smokes; how she flatters her palate; how she appeases the cravings of a pampered appetite; how she befuddles her brain! Alas, the effort of the *passée* to forget! Sometimes, in this futile effort, the *passée* woman is in terror of herself. How cautiously she peers into her gilded or blurred mirror, confronting fearfully and often hating that face, that same old face, that face she knows so well, has known so long, that face that has served so often and well, and is now failing her, playing her false, that face disintegrating before her eyes, that face becoming, in the light of her dreams and fierce desires, a mockery! . . . This old face of hers wearies her—gives her a sick feeling. She is tired of it, very tired of it. It relieves her to admit it. Her hand goes across her brow. . . . For one second she is lost in a dream. . . . She ceases to think.

Ah, yes, what more simple than to look into the worn faces of *passée* women, into their watchful or vacant eyes and read their secret thoughts! What more simple than to live over their pasts with them, feel their past loves, shed their tears, revel in their hidden mortifications, mortifications that ever drag at the skirts of *passée* women, mortifications that they hide, and deny, and defy.

Sometimes while gazing thus into the faces of *passée* women, these women bearing so bravely their tattered beauty, women who at one time—what sad words are these for a woman, "one time"—have so surely triumphed in themselves, I have felt the tears start to my eyes. The battered boys who come out of the trenches limping bravely in spite of their wounds are not more pathetic than my *passée* women who have come out of life's trenches

with wounded souls. They to whom life has meant battle, and who fear more deadly battles yet, after all how brave they are about it, how determined to go on! It's the brave effort that stirs so. One has only to observe their hats, so jaunty, or so big and flaring, with such very silly things on the tops, or protruding from the sides—plumes, birds, beads, daggers, saucy bows! Oh! to rob each head of its gaudy covering, each poor, tired head, and put upon it something plain, just a hood, something useful, and shove its owner on to some barren country road, telling her quietly and gently to go home, to go back to where she came from as a little girl and look at the stars and the sunsets, and rest.

But would they, these *passée* women of mine? No, they would rather cling to those hats and bear the whips and scorn of the great crowded cities, hear the laughter of the young who press forward with the hands of youth to shove them out—off. They had rather keep on deceiving themselves, rather continue in their bitter memories and false hopes and be in the swim! And how they cling to and rely upon personal display! How they weigh themselves down with costly or tawdry jewelry; how they wrap themselves in expensive or well-worn furs, or fold their arms defiantly over richly embroidered or half-soiled gay kimonos!

And how they flee their homes and keep in motion! How they speed in their own motor cars, or have themselves whirled in taxis, here, there, anywhere, or sit restless in subways with roving eyes like those of an old fox on the trail for food, or in the corners of surface cars with vacant eyes, not caring where the car will take them so long as it moves, keeps them conscious of motion—movement.

And what thoughts fill their minds as they keep in motion! A costume this one looked at in an Avenue shop comes up! How excited she was over that dress, how she pictured herself in it; actually her hands trembled! And how useless in this moment it seems! Of what avail any longer a new dress? Why bother? Why not admit it's all over for her—this dressing, this passionate effort, surging up in fury to charm and dying out of its own hopelessness. Ten years ago—ah! yes, ten years ago she was at her zenith—her glory! . . . What's become of—what eyes he had! What a fool he made of himself! How he blew his money! . . . Why not write him a note to his club? . . . Why not? . . . He might respond! . . . But would he? Perhaps not! Besides—she is lying to herself. He wouldn't respond, she knows, for has she not written many times? . . . And—that other one—that mad one, that— The costume comes up again, the saleswoman (designing thing) told her it was "made for her." Made for her! She smiles an acrid smile. Somehow the very thought of that dress hanging there with all the others sickens her.

III

Sometimes these *passée* women forget, or appear to forget, that they are *passée*, and then, indeed, it is no, not to laugh, but again to weep. In these moments they remind me of drunken sailors clinging to the masts of their sinking ship. The waters are coming over them, the dark, turbulent waters of old age, but there is yet a moment left to be drunken and to cling. Soon —how they assure themselves as to this, how many times in a week—they will be submerged, submerged by old age, but even while holding the thought in terror life is still sweet—wine has not yet lost its effect and men still people the earth!

Ah! yes, my *passée* women, in spite of everything, still hold, hold tenaciously, with the strength of old hands, to the thoughts of men. Back of them they look to the east, where the sun rose so gorgeously, pushing forward an army of men to their embraces; beyond them they look and will look to the end of all things for them, to those men receding in the blinding light of the set-

ting sun. Neither the east nor the west is now actually theirs.

There is restlessness among *passée* women unknown to the young women, restless as they, too, are. The young woman may dance, and flit about in her restlessness. She is excused for this, made excusable for flights, for nonsense, for exuberance, for folly. The *passée* woman must sit still with *her* restlessness. She is excused for nothing. And how often is her patience not sublime, that patience that keeps her stubbornly silent like the Spartan youth with the vulture gnawing at his vitals. Passion is a gnawing vulture or so the eyes of *passée* women seem to say. When I see them, see them rove about, see them settle upon the faces and in the eyes of men—ofttimes all too unworthy of their glance—they betray to me the secret they so proudly hide.

A *passée* woman in the grip of intermittent hopes and with love still aflame is one of the great tragedies of the ages. Still capable of the transports of love, still hungering for love, and too often defeated in her effort to find it. The flames that attracted, that caught the glance from afar, have burned out, but the fire still smoulders. Oh! the secret thoughts of *passée* women who are still controlled by vanity, avariciousness, the love of power, and, above all, by their thoughts of men! Hear their silent cry to men!

Give me all that I have experienced, suffered at your hands, your infidelities, your injustices, your indifference —worse by far than injustice—your selfishness, your brutality, your scoffing, your sneering, your penuriousness, your manner of cheating, your manner of lying, but your embraces all the same, your acknowledgment that I still *am*, still am to receive from you, even though to receive be the worst that you can give!

The *passée* women of a great city! They who love and are not loved; they who starve themselves and are never thin; they who ease their hearts with false hopes; they who cover their wrinkles with strange lotions; they who hide their white hair under deadly dyes as they hide their aching hearts under false and bitter smiles.

Oh! *the passée* women of a great city!

IMMORTALITY

By Maxwell Anderson

AFTER the others go—
Climbing decorously, all in solemn black,
Into hired motors, as the custom is—
Perhaps the trenchers, pushing yellow clay
Into the neat-cut shaft, will talk of me:
"Well, he's dead now. He was a writer fellow."
"My wife showed me a poem once he wrote
In a magazine. It was about some girl,
You know—but, hell, I couldn't make it out."

A TOUS LES VENTS

By Baronne de Maighan

TORTUREE par le démon de la littérature, je m'en fus, il y a quelques années, trouver plusieurs directeurs de journaux. Comme je n'étais pas jolie on me recut froidement.

— Que désirez-vous, Madame?

— Faire du journalisme.

— Avez-vous un nom?

— Mon Dieu . . . comme tout le monde.

— Eh bien, en littérature, il en faut un comme personne.

— Mais c'est pour m'en faire un que je viens ici.

— Adressez-vous au service de la publicité.

— Je ne peux pas payer.

— Alors, mille regrets chère madame et repassez quand vous serez connue.

Comment atteindre cette rénommée autrement qu'en espèces sonnantes et trébuchantes, fis-je en m'en allant?

Le mieux est d'observer la manière employée par ceux qui sont au pinacle de la célébrité.

Il y a bien la gloire hèréditaire, celle qu'on tient de son papa ou de sa maman. Point n'est besoin d'écrire en ce cas. Si vous vous obstinez à vouloir produire, tant pis pour vous: vos œuvres sont vendues d'avance.

Dame, un nom, comme un point, c'est tout.

Mais il n'appartient pas à tous d'être fils ou fille à papa de génie.

Cherchons donc ailleurs. Je vois l'aéroplane qui fut en un temps le tremplin de la gloire. Vous pourrez briguer la députation, comme Védrines, ou une trésorerie générale. Un poète peut aussi s'en servir. Voyez Icare. N'est-il pas devenu célèbre à cause d'une histoire analogue? Le chouchou des muses devra donc s'envoler sur un monoplan ou sur un biplan. Les autres plans sont laissés aux jardiniers et aux architectes. Quant aux commercants, nul n'ignore qu'ils font toujours leurs affaires en *triplan*. Il est nécessaire que avant de monter, le poète, sans crainte de *sa lyre* son luth, prenne ses derniers poèmes sous son bras et laisse tomber du haut de sa nacelle ses plus jolis *verres* sur la tête des assistants enthousiasmés. Une fois lancé, il faut s'attendre à ce que le *vers dict* (e) un nouveau mouvement dans la direction de l'appareil.

Si le barde aviateur capote il est sûr que sa chute fera grand bruit.

S'il se tue, ses amis le recueilleront en déclamant des vers-glas (1).

Il y a le meurtre encore. Quand on ne craint pas d'être logé à l'ombre et au frais... de l'Etat, c'est de la réclame qui porte. Vous achetez un browning (modèle de la C. G. T.) Vous placez cinq balles dans la tête d'un passant que vous ne connaissez ni d'Eve ni d'Adam et aussitôt voilà votre avenir assuré.

Les manchettes des journaux porteront ces mots:

Un acquittement certain.—L'assassin était un type dans le genre de Victor Hugo, ou, *qu'on le guillotine mais qu'on dépose son corps au Panthéon!*

Par contre si vous avez le malheur de démolir votre concierge ou une ouvreuse, vous passerez seulement dans les faits *d'hiver*. D'ici là vous serez totalement oublié. Comprenez donc! C'est si légitime de supprimer ces bêtes-là.

Enfin il y a le suicide. On accorde

(1) Nouvelle sorte de vers employée principalement dans les fêtes où l'on chante le mort d'un Léon Dierx ou d'un Ver-laine.

d'ordinaire beaucoup de talent à ceux qui ne sont plus. Seulement il faut avoir le courage d'enjamber le parapet de la Seine. Et même en été quand on ne sait pas nager, on n'y regarde à deux fois avant de se noyer.

En tous cas, ne vous amusez pas à écrire avant d'être connu. C'est totalement inutile. Faites-vous d'abord un nom et repassez dans six mois. Suivez mes conseils et croyez-moi: pour être célèbre, les meilleurs tuyaux sont ceux que je vous passe dans celui de l'oreille.

THE END OF THE STORY

By Lucy Chapin Rich

"HAPPINESS as a theme," remarked the Cynic, "is quite as impossible as in reality."

"How so?" demurred the Idealist.

"Have you not noticed that as soon as they begin to 'live happily ever after,' the book is done?"

LOVE SONG

By Marguerite Wilkinson

CALL me to beauty
Or call me to pain—
When you have called
It shall not be in vain,

For your voice is lovely
And your word is just,
Your soul is strong
For the weight of my trust.

Call—I will answer you
While I have breath,
Though you should summon me
Even to death.

IF half of pleasure is in the expectation of it—then the other half is in the remembrance.

LES FOURBERIES DE COPEAU

By George Jean Nathan

SALIENT among the potentialities of Jacques Copeau's transplanted Théâtre du Vieux Colombier is the revealment in the United States of the modern French play in its uncensored flower, to the coincidental establishment and possible eventual domestic acceptance of the fact that the business of adaptation commonly visited upon that play is approximately as sensible as presenting Henry VIII in the light of an unconscionable hand-holder. The current promiscuous subtractions from the French play before that play is deemed fit for the American tooth are based upon two characteristic assumptions: first, in the instance of farce, that the Anglo-Saxon is incapable of viewing adultery save as tragedy, and second, in the instance of tragedy, that the Anglo-Saxon is incapable of viewing adultery save as grand opera. From these premises, both to a preponderant degree well-reasoned, are deduced the so-called adaptations which expound French farce to the American audience as a somewhat inscrutable procedure in which a man's mistress remains oddly enough a virgin, and the French problem play as a triumph of phylactery over physiology. As I have often pointed out, the dénouement is the kind of farce that proves that illegitimate babies are the result of promiscuous kissing, and the kind of problem plays that, in the original French, show us a man tiring of his wife and entering into a *liaison* with his wife's best friend and, in the adaptation, a man tiring of his wife's best friend and entering into a *liaison* with his wife.

It is a peculiarity of the Anglo-Saxon that he is able to conceive the seventh sin under no circumstances as a collaboration, but under all circumstances only as a plagiarism. Thus, it may figure for him as the basis of a melodramatic play in which a friendless young *émigrée* is decoyed upon docking by a plausible Neapolitan or in which the wife of a Union general is sardoued while in a fainting condition by an inebriated Confederate spy, but scarcely ever as a biological *scherzo*. It would seem, indeed, that its dramatic negotiation is comprehensible to him only in terms of aphasia, knockout-drops or the Metropolitan orchestra. And it would seem, further, only to be æsthetically justifiable if expounded by a tenor and soprano neither of whom weighs less than two hundred and fifty pounds. He is able to swallow Tristan and Isolde, but he gags at de Caillavet and de Flers' King Serge and Marthe Bourdier. He can work up an understanding smile for Musette and Marcel, but naught save a blush for Capus' Charlotte and her barrister. This attitude on his part makes for queer doings when the Continental play is prepared for Anglo-Saxon consumption, and not the least of these queer doings is a process of adaptation that, albeit unintentionally, converts such a play into what is unquestionably a much more scampish affair than it was before the surgeon set about his operation.

The Frenchman regards a repeal of VII in either one of two sharply defined ways: (1) as a catastrophe, or (2) as a joke. And his plays treat of the subject from the one viewpoint or the other. The Anglo-Saxon, on the other hand, views the business primar-

ily as a catastrophe—or professes so to view it—with the result that his plays must handle the topic either with a revolver or not at all. A frolicsome regard of the situation has about it, to his mind, something decidedly indecent. This alone, of all the crimes and sins of the decalogue, is taboo; this alone must not be laughed at, even by way of simple theater pastime. He sees nothing wrong in laughing himself half to death over wholesale murder (as in "Kismet") or over wholesale thievery (as in "Officer 666") or over wholesale lying (as in "The Truth") or over wholesale guile and deception (as in "Charley's Aunt") or over wholesale lawlessness (as in "Turn to the Right"), but he draws a hard and fast line at Scarpia in cap and bells. And so he demands—or so at least the caterers to his theatrical taste imply he demands—that when sex intrudes upon his farce stage it be presented not as an act of physiology but as an act of Christian Science. From this insistence comes the locally adapted French farce like "Where There's a Will," in which, by the terms of a bequest, a lady must give birth to an heir in less than a year's time and to the consummation of that end persuades a strange young man to squeeze her hand, and the analogously edited French farce like "The Beautiful Adventure" in which a man hopelessly compromises a young woman by bidding her good-night at the threshold of her boudoir.

One merely increases nudity by draping it in transparent *négligé*. And, similarly, these adaptations increase, rather than decrease, the alleged indelicacies of the originals. They amount, intrinsically, to little more than an attempt to persuade Little Willie to believe in Santa Claus by dressing up his unmistakable pater in absorbent cotton and a maroon bath-robe. To imagine that the American theatergoer actually believes for one moment that a French husband is carrying on like a lunatic merely because his best friend has just chucked his wife under the chin, or that a French married woman is hysterically contemplating throwing herself out of the window because she has come in unexpectedly and, through the boudoir door, has caught sight of her husband and a gay actress from the Folies Bergère reading "La Suisse Famille Robinson," is surely going pretty far. The truth, of course, is that the American theatergoer is, in this situation, much like an eleven-year-old child whose parents still insist that the stork brings the baby: he isn't absolutely certain where the baby comes from, but he is absolutely certain that the stork has nothing whatever to do with the case; and so his mind plays upon a number of gipsy chords—and chiefly on the black keys. The result is curiosity, smirking, whispering behind the slate, stealing "Sapho" out of the book-case. And the further result is a *double entendre* that, by the simple estimate of mathematics, is just twice as entendreful as a direct statement of fact. This is what Jacques Copeau should demonstrate, and eloquently, to the more discerning among American producers and to the more lettered members of the American public.

And also to the American censorship. Nothing, we are told, is inimical to the moral welfare if one can laugh at it. Why, then, a French farce must be adapted while a serious French play may be presented intact, is something of an enigma. From the point of view of American morals, Bernstein's "L'Elévation" is an exceptionally immoral play. It justifies adultery and makes a sympathetic hero and heroine of the parties thereto. And this justification and canonization are accomplished with a ringing and convincing rhetoric. And yet it may be, and is, presented in America without so much as a trace of the blue pencil, where such a farce—a thing for loud laughter alone—as de Caillavet and de Flers' "The King," which even in the original demonstrates that adultery has its penalties, apparently may not be presented save the adultery of the boudoir be modified to a mere clandestine playing footie under the dining-room table.

The paradoxical morality of the entire business becomes the more grotesque when one stops to consider that the American audience has become so tired of the French triangle drama *á la* Bernstein in which middle-aged married women go astray and convince the American audience that there is ample moral justification for such an excursion, that the American audience will no longer bestow its custom upon that drama, reserving its patronage instead for the French triangle farce *á la* de Caillavet and de Flers in which young unmarried women go astray and convince the American audience that there is no moral justification for the excursion. The physiological dereliction of Bernstein's Suzanne Cartier, defended, explained and exonerated, it does not stomach, at least to the extent of two dollars; the promiscuities of de Caillavet and de Flers' Therese Manix, undefended, unexplained and lightly laughed away, it rushes to observe in such crowds that the play becomes one of the biggest successes of an entire season. The problem is as fertile in eccentricities as Richard Strauss' solos for baritone and orchestra. The explanation, if there is an explanation, may possibly be discovered in the same native hypocrisy which, in another direction, permits the puritanical citizen unblushingly to enjoy a piping-hot Chicago, A.D., hula-hula dance if only the backdrop be painted up to represent Babylon, B. C., and in the matter closer to hand, permits him to revel in the forbidden joys of Paul de Kock provided only the adapter tell him, with a wink, that the single ground for divorce in New York State is catching the whooping cough.

The projection of an honest light upon the current practises of adaptation is, as I see it, the leading white mark of the Copeau ambassadorship. To argue against this that since he plays in the French tongue he will be unable vividly to convince the American audience is to argue that since Mimi Aguglia played "Salome" in the Sicilian tongue she was unable to convince the American audience that the play was more sincere and effective in its authentic form than it would be were it adapted for the audiences of Miss Ruth Chatterton. The scene at the close of Act II of "The King," in its original form, is the same in all languages. Its meaning is quite as clear if the accompanying dialogue is in Sanskrit as if the words are written in English. The American who doesn't understand a single word of Russian has never yet failed, in an alien theater, to comprehend perfectly the scene at the conclusion of the prologue to Tolstoi's "Resurrection." The American who doesn't know a single word of French has never yet, in Paris, failed to understand the central episodes of "The Habit of a Lackey" or "The Sacrifice" or Jacques Richepin's "The Minaret" or "Have You Anything To Declare?"

Beyond this aspect of the Copeau enterprise, I can see little to intrigue the experienced critical attention. The local swallowing of the gentleman as an important Continental theatrical figure is, in its way, akin to the like gulping in the past of Gaby Deslys as a monarchical darling, Doctor Cook as a pole ferret and Granville Barker as a super-Stanislawsky, each as the result of a cunning press agency. As a self-advertiser, Copeau's only rival in Paris in recent years has been Henry Bernstein. And still, with all his Yankee talents in his direction, the fact remains that he actually created a very meagre stir in France during the life of his local theatrical undertaking. There, as in New York, his original and most striking artistic accomplishments seemed to be confined very largely to performances in the pages of ornate pamphlets. As an obtainer of highly laudatory endorsements of himself, Copeau has indeed surpassed even Danderine. But, though he is an unmistakably intelligent man and though, like Barker, he has a fine regard for the best dramatic literature of his country, he is at bottom, also like Barker, a mere artist of the theater at second hand, a mere belated mimic of

Reinhardt, Craig, Stanislawsky and even the more remote Antoine (who produced Molière much as Copeau with a flourish now produces him), a man of the theater who still loudly revolts against those ideas of previous revolters which the latter revolters, after practical experiment, have already quietly and prosperously abandoned.

Copeau, during the one season of his theater's career in Paris, became to Paris precisely what young Mr. Edward Goodman and his associates of the Washington Square Players became in their first season to New York. Copeau, in all truth, has done not one-half for the French theater what the Washington Square Players have done for the American. The acting of his company is very, very much better—on this score there is of course no identification—but in the matter of ideas on scenic investiture and in the matter of drama and theory of dramatic interpretation he has shown himself by his accomplishments in no direction and in no degree superior to these, our own amateurs. Indeed, when one considers the vastly deeper treasury which he has had at his command, his accomplishments seem in comparison even less. What the somewhat excited gentleman of *The Times* contributes by way of choicest bouquet to Copeau, that "of two things he is very much the enemy: of a tradition that tends to mere routine, and of any disposition to exploit externalities—from tricks in scenery and costume to the personalities of favourite actors—at the expense of what is deeply true and beautiful," applies equally to the Washington Square Players, to the Provincetown Players and to the Neighborhood Playhouse. Beautiful sentiments, praiseworthy promises. Indeed, the same beautiful sentiments, the same praiseworthy ideals, spoken by (and subsequently of) Augustin Daly in his prospectus issued immediately after he had signed the lease for the Fifth Avenue Theater back in 1869. (*Vide* "Life of Augustin Daly," by Joseph Francis Daly.)

Coming to Paris in the season of the life of the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, I found at my hotel a note from the American playwright, Hopwood, for whose theatrical opinions I entertain a very substantial respect, urging me to sojourn in the institution, as he already had done, and compare then impressions. I spent considerable time in the little theater, saw several very interesting plays and a great deal of nonsensical stage affectation, saw numerous very dull plays and a great deal more of empty stage posturing, and ended up by finding that Hopwood had found the same things and had come to the same conclusions—the conclusions similarly reached by the many Frenchmen of theatrical letters with whom the enterprise was discussed—the conclusions, to wit, (1) that Copeau was interesting to Paris chiefly because Paris was almost entirely ignorant of the new methods of the theater long since familiar to the other nations, (2) that he was, in a way, the theatrical fashion of the moment by virtue of his diplomacy in getting the *jour d'abonnement* parties to give his theater an off-boulevard air, and (3) that certain of the plays in his repertoire were intrinsically so very good that they were successful in triumphing over the affectations which he was superimposing upon them.

The measure of sympathy that Copeau received from the Parisian was identical with the measure of sympathy the Washington Square Players have received from the New Yorker. And the Parisian in this regard was the same type of Parisian that the New Yorker in this regard is a New Yorker. Just as the anti-Broadway programs of the local amateurs gained for them the attention of a certain class of New Yorkers, so the anti-boulevard programs of Copeau gained for him the attention of that certain class of Parisians who, had they been New Yorkers, would have been the patrons of the Washington Square Players. But Copeau is no more a new Gordon Craig than Goodman of the local

amateurs is a new Max Reinhardt. The simple truth about Copeau, indeed, is that he is a mere ghost of Craig in a windsor tie, Latin Quarter hat and baggy corduroy trousers. His voice is his master's voice. To ascertain this, all one need do is, first, to read what he, in his various brochures, calls his "audacious" ideas on acting, scenery, the spirit of the author's work, et cetera, and then turn back to the files of Craig's "Mask" wherein, now somewhat covered with the dust of passing years, one may find the same ideas in very largely the same words. Or to Mr. Moderwell's engaging book on "The Theater of Today," more easily accessible, in which along toward page one hundred and twenty-eight one may balance Copeau's "Not Nature, but release the spirit of the poet from the text of the play," with Craig's "Not Nature, but look into the play of the poet." And Copeau's antagonism to realism and championship of style with Craig's "Not realism, but style." And Copeau's "Suppression of so-called stars" with Craig's "No personalities, but art." . . . What tempests of yesterday! But that, with all this, Copeau is a sagacious fellow remains impressed upon any one who has first laid a close eye to his ingenuous stage paraphernalia and then observed the canny way he rolls up his sleeves, puts in his hands and thoroughly convinces his clients that before their very eyes he is pulling out of the paraphernalia live artistic goldfish.

In his ideas of stage embellishment, Copeau strings along with the school which professes to believe that the best way to encourage the imagination is to do away with the scenery; in other words, that the most subtle way in which to make an audience imagine in turn such scenes as the forest in "As You Like It," the grounds adjoining Leonato's house in "Much Ado," the sea-coast in "Twelfth Night" and the big battle scene with Sheridan riding to the rescue in "Shenandoah," is not to set the stage with four different pictures representing respectively a forest, a garden, a sea-coast and a battlefield, but merely to fix up the stage with three tall white pillars, a couple of jars of nasturtium and some blue velvet portières. Now, this may be all very well, but I have as good an imagination as the next man and yet I submit that when the program tells me a scene is laid, as in "Les Fourberies de Scapin," in a public square in Naples and Copeau shows me a stage adorned only with a tapestry-hung balcony at the back, supported by a number of imitation marble columns and decorated with several pots of wisteria, what I imagine is less a public square in Naples than the lobby of the Hotel Astor.

The scenic affectations of such producers as Copeau are as empty, as futile and as absurd as, on the other hand, are the scenic affectations of such producers as Belasco. But, of the two schools, give me Belasco. Like many another, I feel rather in the manner of a kindergarten lad when Belasco asks me to imagine a gentleman's library by showing me a room filled to the ceilings with lavish sets of Genie Holzmeyer, Hall Caine and O. Henry and with passionate boudoir lamps and reproductions of "Aurora," "Paul and Virginia," Edwin Landseer's "Stag at Bay," Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair" and Millet's "Angelus" in gold flowered frames, but it is nevertheless much easier for me under such circumstances to get half-way to imagining a library than when Copeau lifts his curtain and discloses to my vision some pink curtains and green screens that, only five minutes before, he had requested me to imagine represented something like "Without the Castle, At Inverness."

The so-called New Scenery requires, for its complete practicability and effectiveness, the great and telling tact of a first-rate producer like Reinhardt. Without this tact, it becomes a mere affectation, a mere specious begging of the question, like giving a calico ball in wartime or patriotically knitting for the soldiers at a Wagner opera. As we get it most commonly in America, with

but a few distinguished exceptions, the New Scenery is Art in the degree, and in the sense, that a new stack of foolscap is literature.

II

One of the diverting peculiarities of Mr. Robert Housum's comedy, "The Gipsy Trail," lies in the playwright's conception of what goes to constitute a romantic male personality. The little play sets to contrast such a personality with one scrupulously prosaic and to exhibit the effect of each upon the affections of a moony flapper. In the negotiation of this business, the viewpoint of the author operates in such artless wise that the character intended for the unromantic suitor turns out to be the authentically romantic fellow and the character ostentatiously designed as the Rassendyl the unromantic —to the extreme embarrassment of the integrity of the flapper character who, for the purposes of the play, has then arbitrarily to jilt the actually romantic man and belie the true preference of every blessed woman under the sun by marrying the playwright's misguided notion of a romantic man. Mr. Housum's idea of a woman's idea of a romantic man is grounded upon the obvious fallacies (1) that a man may be at once romantic and extremely talkative, (2) that he may make love audibly and (2a) that he may make it in terms of a Canadian Pacific Railroad circular describing the beauties of the passing scenery, (3) that he may lie beautifully and then promptly suffer an attack of conscience and recant, and (4) that after he has had a quarrel with a woman he may best win her over not by going off and keeping her guessing for several days but by hurrying humbly back to her ten minutes after she has sent him packing.

To allege that whether this is true or not true matters little, since the call is only that the romantic character shall appear romantic to the foolish flapper character, is to miss the point. The woman who goes to the theater must successfully visualize herself in the place of the heroine of a play or that play fails of its purpose. And the woman who goes to "The Gipsy Trail" must therefore find herself beset by romantic misgivings. The play, for all that the management seems to believe to the contrary, is a man's play. It eulogizes as romantic all the deadly prosaic qualities of every man in its audience. It flatters his banalities, his unimaginative methods of amour, his periodic and bogus Van Bibberisms. And it should consequently be a success. The women will, in wily way, pretend to like it in order to flatter the men whom it flatters and the men will, in somewhat clumsier way, blame their earnest admiration for it on the pretending women . . . Come to think of it, now, I wonder if Housum didn't commit his romantic misdemeanours with his tongue in his cheek!

III

"Blind Youth," by the Messrs. Lou Tellegen and Willard Mack, is a gaudy tale of grog, adultery, eavesdropping behind the portière, stealthy whisperings over the telephone, unexpected materializations in the left upper entrance, and intermittent elevations of both fists and threats to kill if ever this character or that ventures again to cast aspersions on pure womanhood. The play may be described as the sort in which some character peremptorily remarks "We won't discuss that" whenever something for interesting discussion presents itself.

IV

The latest program of the Washington Square Players offers renewed testimony to the authenticity of the place these amateurs have won for themselves in our American theater. Even the quality of their acting, until lately a thing of mean proportions, has witnessed a very considerable improvement. The recent plays, all of them the work of American writers, are on all points superior to nine out of ten of the Broadway exhibitions. "Neigh-

bours," by Zona Gale, has in it all the so-called "human nature" that the Broadway hacks essay assiduously to capture and succeed eventually in capturing mainly in such terms as a mother's love for her child or someone's love for a dog. "The Critic's Comedy," by a Mr. Kaplan, is an exceptionally good little comedy with a sharp eye to character and a musician's ear to the sound orchestration of laughter and pathos. "The Girl in the Coffin," by Theodore Dreiser, is already familiar to readers of this periodical, since its first appearance was in these pages several years ago. It plays as well as it reads and presents itself in the theater as an unmistakably impressive drama in miniature.

V

My favourite and oft-repeated contention that one good-looking girl is sufficient to make almost any kind of music show thoroughly enjoyable, is once again eloquently proved in the case of the Messrs. Shuberts' production, "Over the Top," and at the same time even more eloquently disproved in the case of the Messrs. Dillingham and Ziegfeld's Cocoanut Grove production, "A Night in Spain." In the first direct instance, what is otherwise an entertainment of modest pressure is given a tripled fillip through the presence on the stage of the arch tit-bit known to fame as Miss Justine Johnstone, and in the second indirect instance, what is otherwise an entertainment of superior pressure is deleted of not the slightest fillip by the presence on the stage of a company of ladies even the most beautiful of whom fails signally in ambrosial approach to Mr. A. H. Woods.

The Spanish type of beauty, of which these latter ladies are somewhat remotely representative, is, for all the democratic affectation of the Anglo-Saxon Lothario, as much below the American type of beauty as the American is below the Japanese. Beauty, after all, in its general world sense, is determinable very largely in accordance with its degree of delicacy, as Nietzsche and numerous others have pointed out. The Spanish beauty is the beauty of the ripe tomato; the American, the beauty of a slice of tomato on a lettuce leaf; the Japanese, the *utsukushiki* of the lettuce leaf. To the true connoisseur, whether he be Spanish or American, the Spanish bloom has about it something too much of the quality of the tube-rose, of a parade with the brass bands too close together, of a German *carte du jour:* it is, in a word, too excessive, too luxuriant. And when, as in the case of the Cocoanut Grove ladies, the exhibited beauty is as far removed from the flower of Spanish beauty as is the beauty exhibited in the Avenue des Acacias from the flower of French beauty, the nature of the æsthetic sensation imparted may be imagined. But, as I have in the beginning suggested, it is this very lack of beauty in these Cocoanut Grove senoritas that presents us with our embarrassing paradox. Where the merely half-way homeliness so common to the New York stage chills—or, at best, leaves one indifferent—the very amazing homeliness of these ladies, by virtue of its sheer magnitude and unaffected splendour, enchants completely. Where the average moderately personable Broadway music show creatures fail to divert the eye a second time after the first chorus, these gorgeously unlovely things attract and hold immobile that same eye as absolutely as—and in the same way as—Cyrano de Bergerac and the Elsie de Wolf scenery, Courbet's "Les Baigneuses" and green stockings, the Fifth Avenue residence of Senator Clark and Jo-jo the Dog-Faced Boy, a Boston bull and the nudes of Paul Cézanne, or Madame Polaire and Youngstown, Ohio. Miss Johnstone is to the Senorita Marco, true enough, as Lysholm Aquavit is to beer; but, as any more civilized Scandinavian will assure you, there are paradoxes in tipples no less than in æsthetics, and the two, though you believe it or no, may yet be mixed to the charm of the palate and the complete satisfaction of the judge of fine arts.

THE NATIONAL LETTERS

By H. L. Mencken

I

THE Cambridge History of American Literature, in three fat volumes (*Putnam*), is the sort of work one must lay in willy nilly, as one must lay in groceries and underwear. It may, in detail, offend grievously; here and there it may bring on a downright rage; but considered as a whole it is without question a diligent and comprehensive work, necessary and long awaited, and the rev. professors who put it together—to wit, Prof. Drs. Trent and Erskine, of Columbia; Prof. Dr. Sherman, of the University of Illinois, and Prof. Dr. Van Doren, headmaster of the Brearley School—deserve the pious commendation of all right-thinking men. We needed just such a punditic treatise most damnably. The history of our national literature was fragmentary and unsatisfactory; it was almost impossible to get a clear view of it; many of its by-ways were wholly unexplored. Well, here in 1,500 or more large pages, is the complete story down to the year 1900—a meticulous unearthing of every last fact, and the arrangement of the entire lot in well-devised and handy pigeon-holes.

The job was pre-eminently one for college professors; it demanded, not any capacity to make the thing charming, nor even any capacity to work out accurate valuations, but merely an encyclopediac knowledge of the indubitable, and a sure skill at cataloguing. The college professor, as I have often argued in this place, is almost devoid of any true critical sense. The stupefying training that he has to go through, and the atmosphere of pedagogic pishposh surrounding him, make him anesthetic to all those fine qualities which distinguish a work of art, and particularly to those delicate and unfamiliar qualities which enter into what we call originality. For a college professor to have discovered Poe, or Whitman, or Kipling, or Joseph Conrad would have been almost as miraculous as for a teacher of harmony to have discovered Wagner or Richard Strauss. But when it comes to embalming and laying out, so to speak, what is accepted —when it comes to what may be called morphology of criticsm—when it comes to arranging the specimens in the museum, then the peculiar talents of the super-sophomore have their chance, and he performs a necessary and unstimulating office with admirable industry, and even with a touch of passion. Thus stand the true critic and the true professor, the one fit for æsthetic obstetrics and the other specially gifted for æsthetic autopsies.

Trouble comes when either of them poaches upon the preserves of the other. Such goings-astray, unfortunately, have been sadly prevalent of late; all the pedagogues seem possessed by a mania to be Brandeses and Sainte-Beuves; nay, Walkleys, Pollards and Hunekers. There is, for example, the case of one of the four now under praise, viz., Prof. Dr. Sherman. His discovery of hobgoblins in the Dreiser fog gave the judicious much grief; his eloquent pæan to the cold mutton ethic of Arnold Bennett rubbed salt in the wound. But in the present business he is within his orbit and within his talents, and so he does a sound and valuable piece of work. In the first volume (the only one

yet in my hand) his labors as editor are augmented by a further labor as contributor, and he offers a chapter on Benjamin Franklin that is excellently contrived—in brief, a capital piece of exposition, careful, conservative and informative. One finds in it a clear review of Franklin's literary activities, a succinct account of his life; and in an exhaustive bibliography at the rear there is a full list of everything he ever published, down to his pamphlet on the stove he invented and his abridgment of the Book of Common Prayer. And there is the like sound dealing with Jonathan Edwards by Dr. Paul Elmer More, with the early American poetasters by Prof. Dr. Samuel Marion Tucker, with the Puritan divines by Prof. Vernon Louis Parrington, and with other literary heroes and phenomena of the colonial and revolutionary period by Prof. Drs. John Spencer Bassett, George P. Winship, William MacDonald, Woodbridge Riley, Elizabeth C. Cook, Arthur Hobson Quinn, Lane Cooper and other such estimable ornaments of Harvard, Amherst, Swarthmore, Cornell, Pennsylvania, Vassar, Brown, Smith and the lesser seminaries.

The plan of the work follows that of the Cambridge History of English Literature, lately come to a conclusion, and the volumes are identical in format with those of the English history. That is to say, they are printed in large and legible type on good paper, and bound stoutly in decent olive buckram, with gilt stamping. The one objection to them, physically, is that they are rather heavy—about two pounds and a half. Reading them would have been easier if each volume had been split in two. But such books, after all, are not for idle and luxurious perusal; their primary purpose is to serve as repositories of facts, and one may consult them quite as comfortably, even if heavy, as one consults an encyclopedia.

In content, this child of the Cambridge History likewise follows its parent. There is no attempt at an unbroken chronology, but the literature of each age is grouped according to matter, and there are special chapters upon writers of salient merit and influence. Thus, in the first volume one finds separate treatises upon the early historians, the early poets, the early dramatists, the political pamphleteers of the Revolutionary era, the first novelists, the colonial periodicals and the chronicles of the pioneer explorers, and in addition, accounts of Franklin, Emerson, Edwards, Irving and Cooper. These discreet dissertations are linked together with skill; the work overlooks no writer of even fourth importance, and the arrangement is such that it is quite easy to find whatever one is seeking. The bibliographies are truly gigantic; it would be difficult to imagine them more comprehensive. After two days and nights of examination I can find but one cause for complaint: John Macy's "The Spirit of American Literature," undoubtedly the best piece of critical writing upon the national letters, does not appear in the pitifully short list of "historical and critical works."

This is the more noticeable because, as I say, the whole list is anything but long. To be precise, it runs to but 39 titles—32 in English, 6 in German and 1 in French. Of the works in English, 31 are by Americans and one is by a Scotchman, John Nichol. So far as I can make out, no Englishman has ever published a book on American literature. The Germans and Austrians have printed seven during the past 27 years, and one of them, the "Geschichte der nordamerikanischen Literatur" of Prof. Dr. Leon Kellner, of Czernowitz, is better than any of our native treatises. These native treatises seldom rise above the level of college text-books. The imbecile work of the late Charles F. Richardson, of Dartmouth (still a favorite text in the seminaries), is typical; it ranks Mark Twain among the newspaper buffoons. Let us pray the good God that the admirable presentation of materials in the Cambridge tomes will inspire some capable hand to prepare an intelligent critical history. Meanwhile. let us not forget thanks

for the Cambridge itself. It is not exquisite, but it satisfies.

II

THE best critical writing on current view is to be found in "Appreciations and Depreciations," by Ernest A. Boyd (*Talbot*), without question the most penetrating critic that the Irish literary revival has yet produced. That revival, as everyone knows, has been gloriously fecund. It has not only sent forth some of the very best poetry and drama of our time; it has actually shaken up the drying bones of the English language, and restored to it some of the resiliency and wild beauty of its great days. But the Celts, until lately, lacked the steadying effect of a native criticism competent to analyze and organize their æsthetic impulse, so to speak, from within. English criticism vacillated between ignorant derision and unordered enthusiasm; American criticism feebly followed it; both overaccentuated the stage literature, as did French and German criticism; as for the Irish professors of the beautiful, such as Edward Dowden, they were amazingly oblivious to what was directly under their noses. But now, at last, the Irish storytellers and showmen and minnesingers have a critic who is thoroughly of them, and yet capable of standing off a bit and viewing them objectively. Mr. Boyd's qualifications, indeed, are obvious and striking. He knows Ireland and the Irish inside out; he is aloof from the political mountebankeries that corrupt the usual Irish judgment; he has an enormous acquaintance with other literatures, especially the English, French, German, Spanish, Greek, Latin and American; most of all, he is a man of the world, an Irish cosmopolitan, and —he can write.

What distinguishes these essays is their sound thinking out, their air of knowledge, their urbane persuasiveness. One finds in them not the slightest clatter of polemic; they are not planned to argue anything, but simply to expose something—and to make it interesting and charming. Turn, for example, to the essay on Dunsany. The topic has been torn to tatters; every newspaper dramatic "critic" and literate college boy has had his say about it; and yet, in a few pages, Boyd describes and estimates Dunsany better than the whole kit and boiling of them. It is done simply, but it is done well. Even better are the essays on Standish O'Grady and the aforesaid Dowden—two mysterious and contradictory fellows, but here made comprehensible. The other men discussed are George W. Russell (AE), John Eglinton and George Bernard Shaw. What! More about Shaw? Well, Mr. Boyd's more is not merely another dose out of the old bottle. He notices a few things that the other contributors to the Shaviad have overlooked; he is brief, but he is incisive. Altogether, a little book of genuine value, and a welcome supplement to the larger "Irish Literary Renaissance" by the same author. The first Irish critic is worthy of the Irish poets, essayists and dramatists.

The other expository works in waiting are less stimulating. In "George Eliot and Thomas Hardy" (*Kennerley*) Lina Wright Berle attacks Hardy on the ground that his theory of life is too gloomy. George, having a touch of Polyanna in her, is thus his superior. Let us be polite and give Miss Berle her way. In "Philistine and Genius," by Prof. Dr. Boris Sidis (*Badger*), the learned author puts the American colleges to the torture on the ground that they ram all their students into one mould, and so work against the development of genius. That the colleges achieve this standardization is obvious enough, but that they spoil many geniuses thereby is not so evident. For one, I should like to see Dr. Sidis attempt a roster of the geniuses thus spoiled by Harvard during the past century. Or, if a complete roster would be too laborious, then a list of, say, two or three. For the rest, all he accomplishes by his indignant pages is to prove that the average pedagogue is a

numskull — a companion piece to the old English demonstration that every Scotchman had fleas. A raucous and futile piece of writing, and almost as heavy with sforzando platitudes as some of the articles I expose in this favorite family galaxy.

Three books on the new movement to save the theatre from actors and cheese-mongers: "The Art Theatre," by Sheldon Cheney (*Knopf*); "The Insurgent Theatre," by Thomas H. Dickinson (*Huebsch*), and "Amateur and Educational Dramatics," by Evelyne Hilliard, Theodora McCormick and Kate Oglebay (*Macmillan*). Of the three, Mr. Dickinson's book is the most interesting, and probably the most valuable. He tells the story of the Little Theatres which now spring up so copiously with the minimum of propagandist rhetoric, and the maximum of accurate knowledge. The slim volume by the three ladies is endorsed by the Educational Dramatic League, and is thus poisoned by the Uplift. Mr. Cheney also allows himself to be bemused by gaudy and most likely purely fabulous purposes. The Little Theatre movement is surely not the solemn and portentous thing that some of the current writers upon it, following Percy Mackaye, seem to think it is; as for me, I am convinced that both the invention of the bichloride tablet and the Battle of Gettysburg were of more practical and spiritual concern to humanity. Its essential value lies in this: that it has devised a way to make theatrical productions cheaper, and so brought them within the means of experimentalists. Some of these experimentalists are clever theatrical craftsmen and have worked out ideas that the regular theatre will eventually adopt. But others are mere posturers and chautauquans, and their so-called innovations are of no more value than the *vers libre* of Greenwich Village, or the pictures of those revolutionary painters who paint with feathers, hypodermic syringes and tooth-brushes. Let us be careful to keep the two apart. And let us also be careful of Little Theatres with electric signs, advance sales and press-agents.

A few printed plays dribble in—not nearly so many as formerly. I begin to fear that the Drama League, by converting the reading of plays into a laborious rite of self-improvement and by recommending a great many bad ones for the purpose, has turned the public stomach against play-reading. At all events, the publishers tell me that there is no longer the avid demand for printed plays that there used to be—say two or three years ago. In those reaching me of late I find nothing startling. In "More Short Plays," by Mary MacMillan (*Stewart-Kidd*), there are some well-devised one-acters; in "The Unseen Host and Other War Plays," by Percival Wilde (*Little-Brown*), I can discern only the obvious. "Hadda Padda," by Godmundur Kamban, an Icelandic dramatist (*Knopf*), is commended by George Brandes, but I can't read it. "Anne Pedersdotter," by H. Wiers-Jenssen, a Dane (*Little-Brown*), is quite as heavy. I think you will be more interested by "Mother Nature" and "Progress," two plays by Gustave Vanzype, a Belgian, printed in one volume (*Little-Brown*). But even in Vanzype I see nothing extraordinary. We have a dozen dramatists quite as skillful.

III

I EMERGE from various books of essays without anything very stimulating to report. "Persian Miniatures," by H. G. Dwight (*Doubleday*), is spoiled by very bad writing. In his "Stamboul Nights" Mr. Dwight told a number of excellent stories in a simple and intriguing manner, and the result was a volume that stood out clearly above the general, but in "Persian Miniatures" he ventures into a preciosity which often drops to mere kittenishness, and the result is a botch. "The Freaks of Mayfair," by E. F. Benson (*Doran*), is made up of a series of sketches recalling those in Thackeray's "A Book of Snobs." We meet the pushing bar-

onet, the lady New Thoughter, the fashionable rector, and other such absurd figures. The trouble with the thing is very plain: it is too inordinately vicious to be good fun. Mr. Benson is not content to exhibit his specimens; he is always succumbing to moral indignation, and assuring us that they are bad. Moreover, a note of personal animosity gets into the business; one feels somehow that many of these poor fools are not sufficiently typical to justify describing them so minutely—that the learned author is presenting for us, not true smears from the Mayfair boil, but cruelly meticulous portraits of individuals whom he dislikes. An author, of course, has a plain right to do his book in his own way, but by the same token a reader has a plain right to prefer a way that shows coherence. The Benson scheme leaves me a bit uncomfortable. Every time I start to laugh it hauls me up and asks me to be outraged.

In such stuff as "Great Possessions," by David Grayson (*Doubleday*), and "Green Trails and Upland Pastures," by Walter Pritchard Eaton (*Doubleday*), I encounter but defective recreation. Both authors indulge themselves in a sentimental nature worship, and in Mr. Grayson sentimentality often descends to the maudlin. As for me, I fail to respond to their enthusiasm for yokels, their long botanical catalogues, their artful forgetfulness of the fact that the country is dull, dirty and uncomfortable, and that countrymen, in the overwhelming main, are stupid and rascally. This sort of thing, in the United States, is an affectation, smelling of the lamp; it will pass away in its time, like Strindbergism, the Emmanuel Movement, the twilight sleep, paper-bag cookery, and other such banal crazes. Our people are actually almost devoid of any responsiveness to the beauties of nature, such as they are. Search our folk-song and you will not find a single stanza on the loveliness of the deep forest, the mystery of the high hills, the caressing charm of the meadows in May. We can show but one song dealing with the music of birds, to wit, "The Mocking-Bird," and that one, for many years past, has been heard only in bordellos. Both Mr. Eaton and Mr. Grayson pump up their passion only by dint of palpable effort. In praising the country they patronize the country. Both books are competently illustrated, but the pen drawings of Thomas Fogarty, in Mr. Grayson's, are spoiled by atrocious printing. Mr. Eaton's illustrator is Walter King Stone; he offers sixteen capital full-page imitations of Munich chromolithographs.

"Trivia," by Logan Pearsall Smith (*Doubleday*), is a small book of miniature essays, obvious in ideas and commonplace in tone. Why such mellow merchandise should be imported from England, in view of the gigantic industry of our native manufacturers, is more than I can understand. Mr. Smith has a fairish talent for the business, but he is surely no more skillful than Agnes Repplier and Dr. Henry Van Dyke. Still worse is "The Well of English and the Bucket," by Burges Johnson (*Little-Brown*), a compendium of platitudes on the writing and teaching of English, astoundingly dull from beginning to end. Finally come various machine-made books, among them, "Creators of Decorative Style," by Walter A. Dyer (*Doubleday*); "The Story of Princeton," by Edwin M. Norris (*Little-Brown*); "Vanished Halls and Cathedrals of France," by George Wharton Edwards (*Penn*), and "Touring Great Britain," by Robert Shackleton (*Penn*). Mr. Dyer's book, so far as I can make out, doesn't contain a single fact or idea that cannot be found in other books; it is, indeed, bald book-making at its worst. The Norris volume on Princeton is almost as empty. Mr. Edwards presents a good many passable drawings, some in color, but his text is a compound of conventional rhapsodies and newspaper clippings. As for Mr. Shackleton, all he manages to achieve is an astoundingly dull narrative of uneventful travel—a truly formidable bore.

In "A Modern Purgatory," by Carlo de Fornaro (*Kennerley*), the author arouses expectations with a sensational title, and then presents a brief and by no means thrilling account of ten months on Blackwell's Island. I have been to Sunday-Schools that were worse, even to the *pediculidae*; scarcely a jail within my experience was so good. Moreover, Mr. Fornaro forgets a really good story to tell this poor story, to wit, the story of his trial. Back in 1909 he was railroaded to the penitentiary for an alleged libel upon the late President Diaz, of Mexico—a mysterious and sinister business, in which Washington seems to have had a hand. A full account of it would be very instructive. It is amazing to me, indeed, that our muck-rakers do not investigate some of the doings of the courts in our fair republic. There is a pamphlet by Justice Edgar M. Cullen which exposes some of them, but the high-handed way in which the common rights of defendants are often overruled, especially in the Federal courts, have yet to be set before the plain people adequately. It is a story with chapters that would curl the hair of Anton Pavlovitch Chekhov.

More volumes of the excellent Modern Library roll out: "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard," by Anatole France; "Father and Son," by Turgeniev; James Stephens' charming "Mary, Mary;" the poems of Swinburne and Oscar Wilde; reprints of Sudermann, Dunsany, Nietzsche, Ibsen, H. G. Wells, William Dean Howells and Arthur Schnitzler (*Boni-Liveright*)—in brief, an extremely appetizing collection, with scarcely a bad book in it. The success of this library has been notable and deserved. It fills a gap and a need. But once more I enter my caveat against binding first-rate books in the limp leather of the department-store gift-counters.

IV

Both in precept and in example there is much profitable matter for American musicians in two books now on the counters: "Contemporary Russian Composers," by M. Montagu-Nathan (*Stokes*), and "Interpreters and Interpretations," by Carl Van Vechten (*Knopf*). Van Vechten's volume, perhaps unconsciously, very vividly indicates the musical state we are in at present: fully a half of his space is given over to elaborate studies of opera singers and such-like zanies, who are greater than Beethoven today and less than the late General Jacob Coxey tomorrow. Nine-tenths of our current criticism is made up of that sort of hollow bosh; it has its parallel in the rhetoric that is lavished upon actors by our critics of the drama. But Van Vechten, as I have pointed out in the past, is a man decidedly superior to his trade, and the fact is made plain by certain later chapters in his book, and in particular by "The Great American Composer," in which, simply and persuasively, he describes what is the matter with American music.

What is it? This: that our composers do not write American music at all, but second-rate French music and fifth-rate German music—that even the best of them seem to be unable to cut the bonds of the school-room. They are, in brief, pedants, and with all the pedant's incapacity for elementary observation. When Antonin Dvorák came among them and showed them the vast stores of virgin musical material lying all about them, they resented the service as, in some mysterious way, a form of derision, and to this day his New World symphony—immediately recognized and approved by concert audiences—has only their sneers. Of late, forced into a reluctant nationalism by the powerful Russian example, they have sought American musical ideas in the music of the Indians—which is no more American, in any intelligible sense, than the theology of the Indians. Meanwhile, a vast body of genuine American music has sprung up out of the depths of popular song, wholly national in idiom, as unmistakably of the soil as baseball. Play "Waiting for